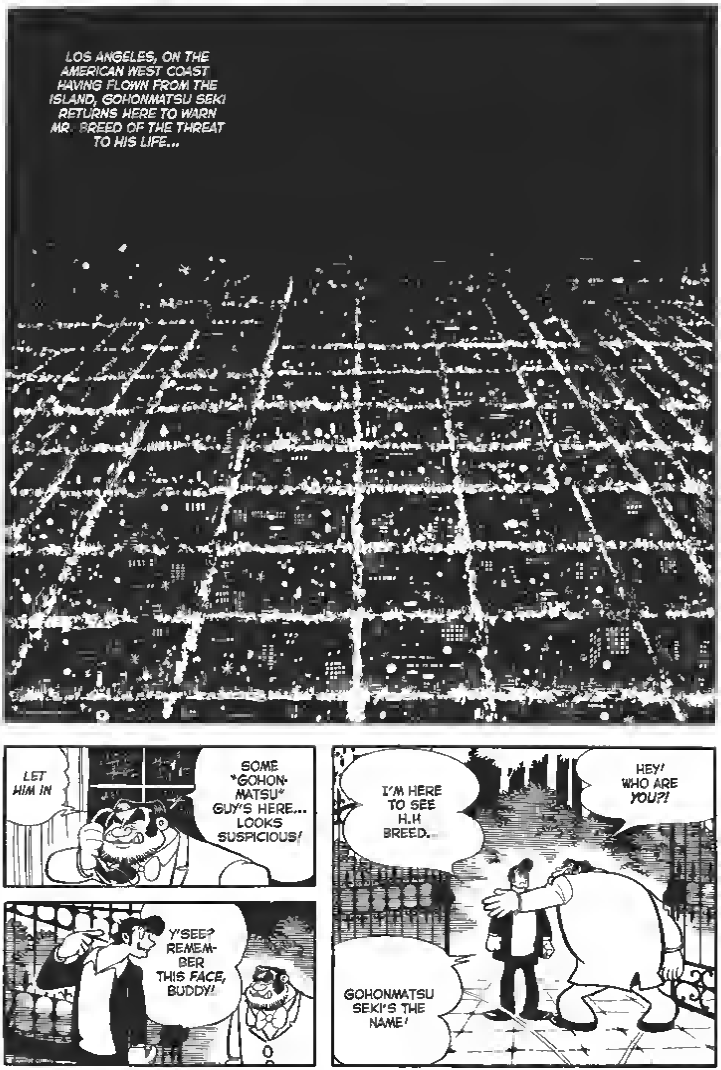
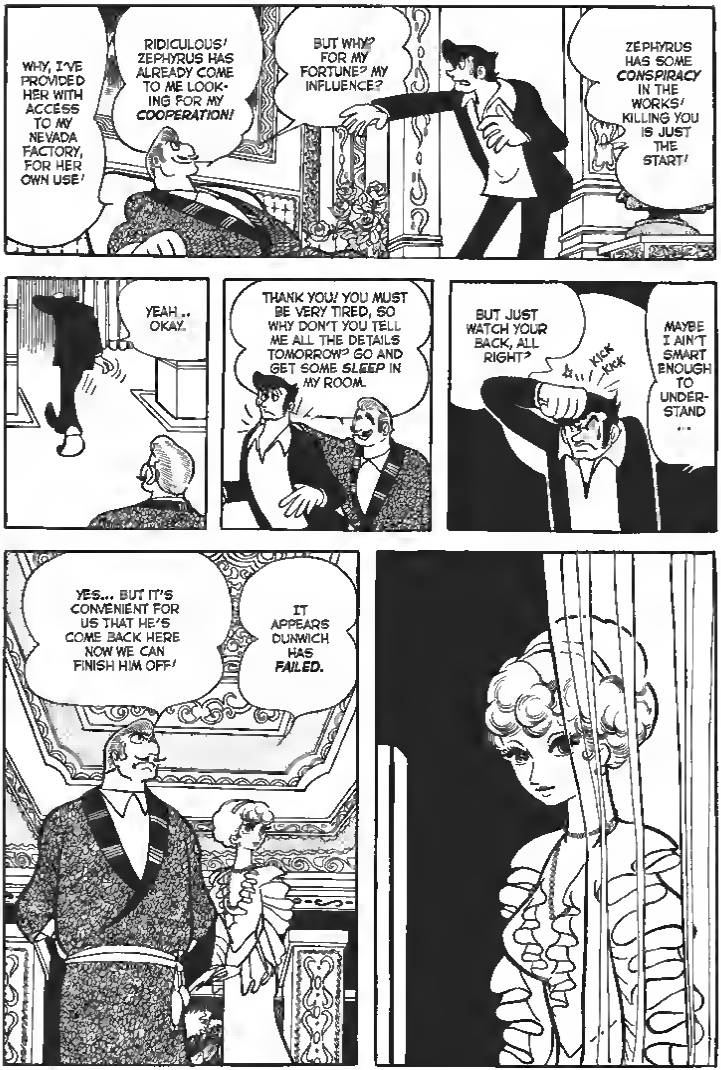
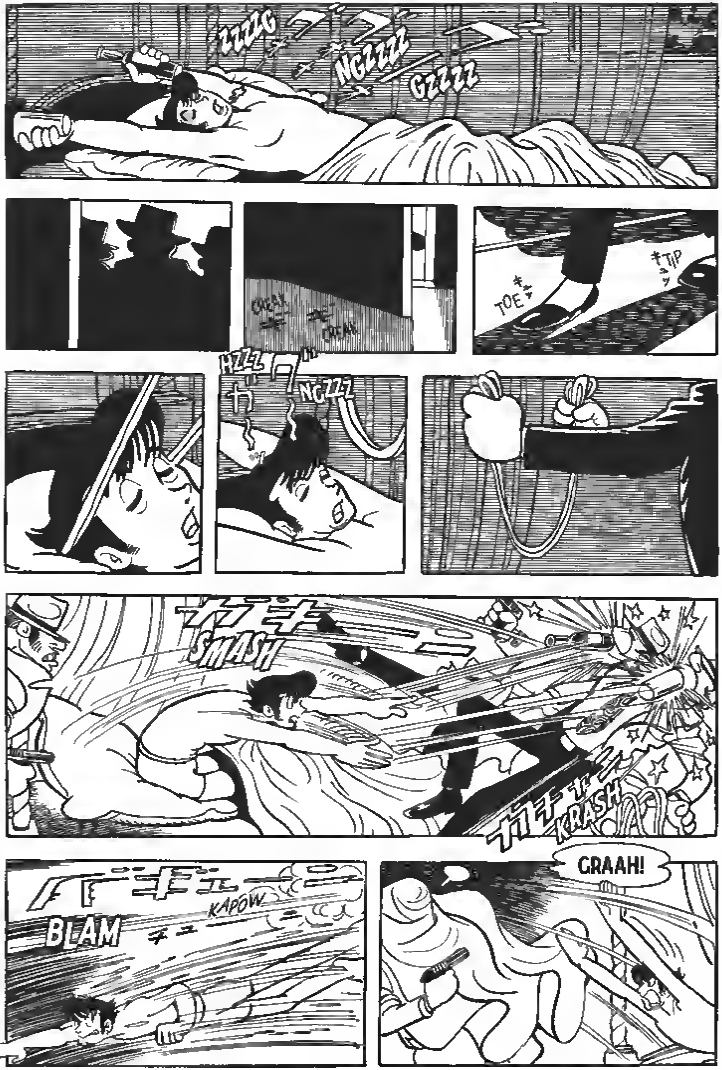
CHAPTER 10

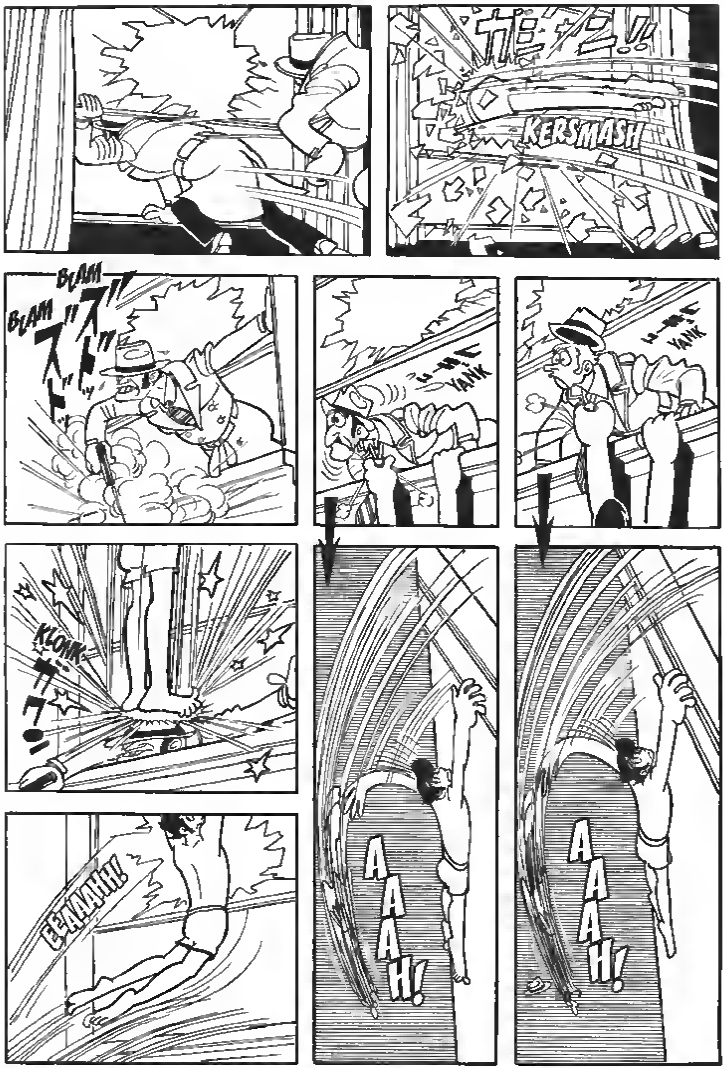
# ALLEGRO UN POCO SOSTENUTO


LOS ANGELES, ON THE AMERICAN WEST COAST HAVING FLOWN FROM THE ISLAND, GOHONMATSU SEKI RETURNS HERE TO WARN MR. BREED OF THE THREAT TO HIS LIFE...
LET HIM IN
SOME "GOHONMATSU" GUY'S HERE... LOOKS SUSPICIOUS!
Y'SEE? REMEMBER THIS FACE, BUDDY!
I'M HERE TO SEE H.H BREED.
HEY! WHO ARE YOU?!
GOHONMATSU SEKI'S THE NAME!

WELL, ALL KINDS 'O STUFF HAPPENED. . MORE THAN I CAN TELL YOU IN A FEW WORDS!
A LITTLE *LATE*, AREN'T YOU?
OKAY... START WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT PART FIRST.
ZEPHYRUS IS GONNA HAVE YOU *MURDERED*, MR. BREED!
ZEPHYRUS? MURDER *ME?* HA! BE SERIOUS!
MR. SEKI! WHERE ON EARTH DID YOU WANDER OFF TO, MY FRIEND?
AT LEAST PUT ON A *TIE* WHEN YOU VISIT MR. BREED'S ESTATE!
AW, *SHOVE* IT!
AND I *SAW* THAT SKIN OF YOU, TOO!
YEAH? WELL I HEARD IT FROM A MAMOO ASSASSIN WHO *ATTACKED* ME...
MR. SEKI, MY ENEMIES ALWAYS CIRCULATE SUCH RUMORS. I'VE HEARD THINGS LIKE THIS A *HUNDRED* TIMES BEFORE!
AND IT HAPPENS TOMORROW!
SHE PLANS TO KILL YOU AND *REPLACE* YOU WITH SOMEONE WEARING A KIND O' *FAKE* SKIN...


WHY, I'VE PROVIDED HER WITH ACCESS TO MY NEVADA FACTORY, FOR HER OWN USE!
RIDICULOUS! ZEPHYRUS HAS ALREADY COME TO ME LOOKING FOR MY COOPERATION!
BUT WHY? FOR MY FORTUNE? MY INFLUENCE?
ZEPHYRUS HAS SOME CONSPIRACY IN THE WORKS! KILLING YOU IS JUST THE START!
YEAH.. OKAY..
THANK YOU! YOU MUST BE VERY TIRED, SO WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME ALL THE DETAILS TOMORROW? GO AND GET SOME SLEEP IN MY ROOM.
BUT JUST WATCH YOUR BACK, ALL RIGHT?
KICK KICK
MAYBE I AIN'T SMART ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND ...
YES... BUT IT'S CONVENIENT FOR US THAT HE'S COME BACK HERE NOW WE CAN FINISH HIM OFF!
IT APPEARS DUNWICH HAS FAILED.

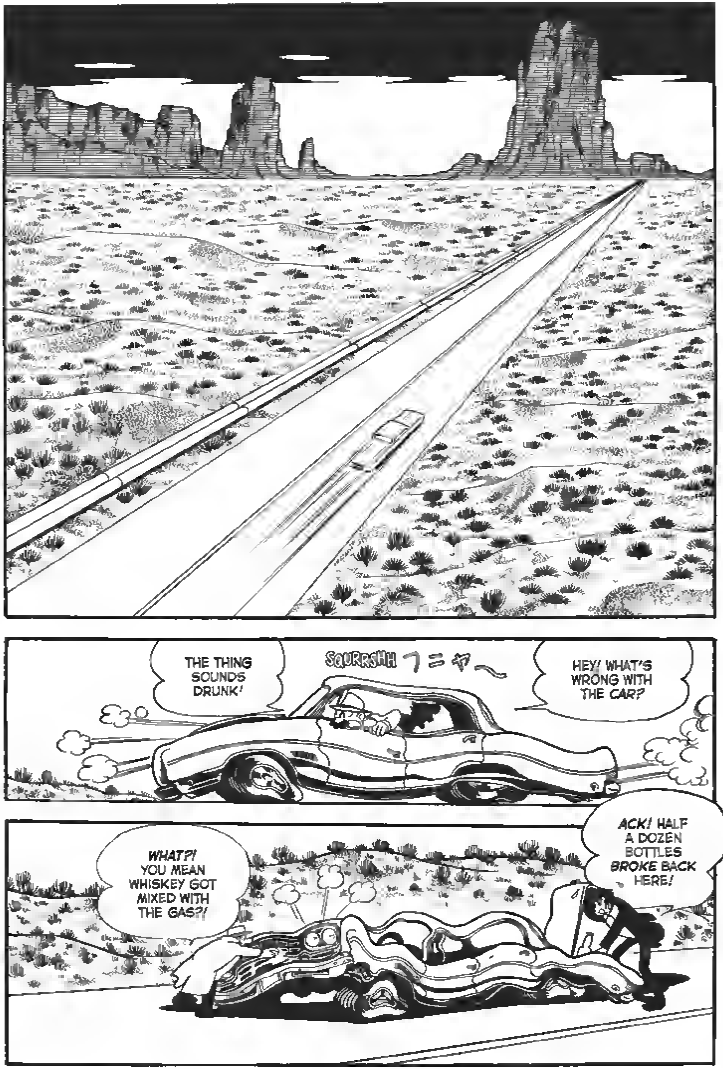

ZZZZG
NGZZZZ
GZZZZ
TOE
TIP
HZZZ
NGZZZ
SMASH
CRASH
BLAM
KAPOW
GRAAH!

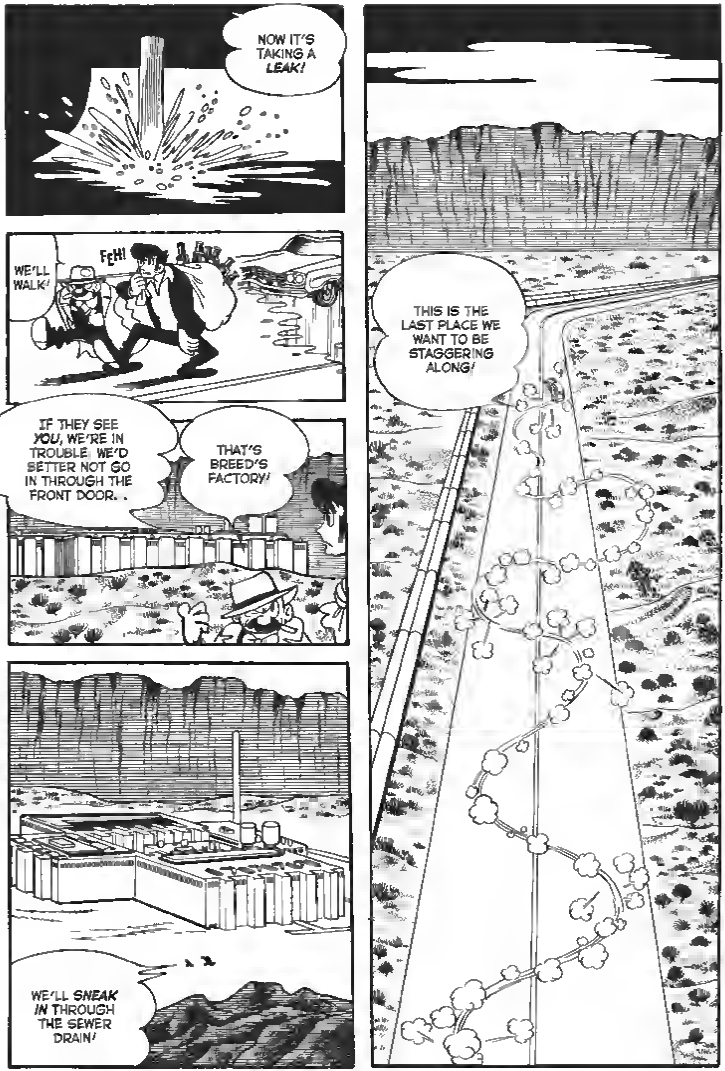

KERSMASH
BLAM
BLAM
YANK
YANK
KLONK
AAAH!
AAAH!
SCREECH!

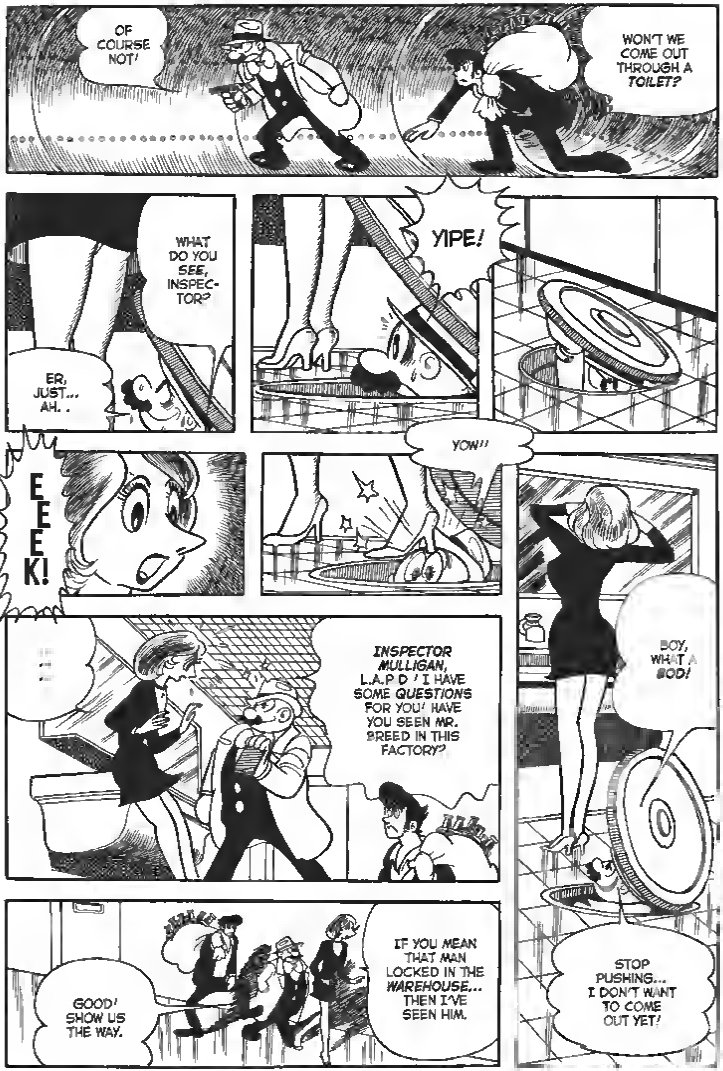
:YAWN:
AHH.. MR. BREED.. I, UH.. DRANK THE LIQUOR THAT WAS IN HERE... AND SLEPT LIKE A BABY!
KACHAK
GZZZ
GZZZ
SOME GUYS ATTACKED ME AND I THREW THEM OUT OF IT, I THINK
RIGHT! NOW I REMEMBER!
HM? NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I SEEM TO REMEMBER SOMETHING HAPPENING LAST NIGHT... WHAT WAS IT?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WINDOW?
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE TOO MUCH OF THINGS, BUT IF OTHER PEOPLE FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN MAMOO AND TRY TO MEDDLE, IT'LL CREATE PROBLEMS FOR ME I'D LIKE YOU TO STAY QUIET ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED.
THIS MORNING, WE FOUND THE BODIES OF THREE MEN BELOW WE DON'T KNOW THEIR IDENTITIES YET, BUT IT'S CLEAR THEY WERE ASSASSINS
YOU ARE AN EASY-GOING FELLOW, AREN'T YOU...?
THEY PROBABLY ATTACKED ME 'CAUSE THEY THOUGHT I WAS YOU.
I'LL FINISH HIM FOR SURE!
DON'T FAIL THIS TIME!
WHY DON'T YOU GO INTO TOWN AND CLEAR YOUR HEAD?
WHY..? YOU'RE IN DANGER MR. BREED!
I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING.

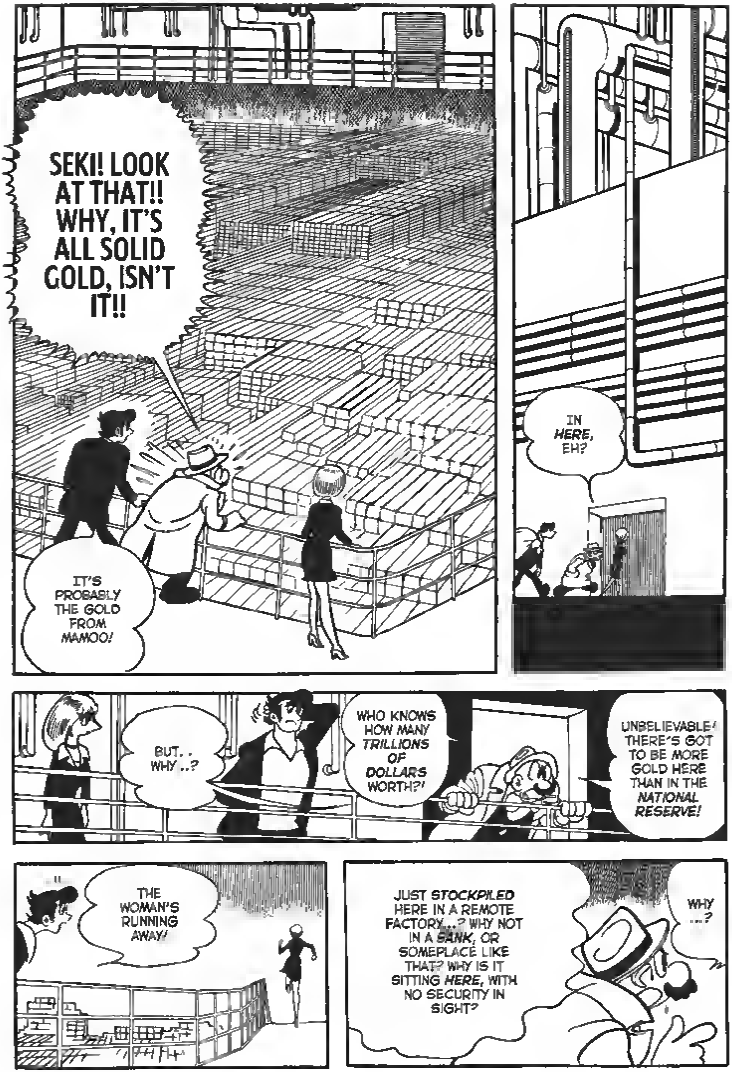
SHAP
LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT!
NOT REALLY, EXCEPT HE'S BEEN KINDA GRUFF...
YOU'RE ONE OF MR. BREED'S MEN, RIGHT? NOTICED ANYTHING DIFFERENT ABOUT YOUR BOSS LATELY?
HANDWRITING ANALYSIS REVEALED WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT BREED WROTE IT...
WE RECEIVED THIS LETTER FIVE DAYS AGO...
IT'S A CRY FOR HELP, IS WHAT IT IS...!
WHY WOULD MR. BREED WRITE THIS..?
THIS IS H.H. BREED PLEASE HELP ME I'M BEING MURDERED SOMEONE IS POISONING ME PLEASE COME TO MY RESCUE — I'M BEING HELD INSIDE MY NEVADA FACTORY

WHAT DID HE SAY TO YOU?
NO..!
MAYBE THE CURRENT MR BREED IS AN IMPOSTER?
WELL, I HAVE A THEORY...
I DON'T GET IT!
NEVADA FACTORY? HMPH! HE MENTIONS THAT AT THE END OF THE LETTER, DOESN'T HE?
HE SAID HE WAS LENDING HIS NEVADA FACTORY TO A CERTAIN WOMAN...!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
SURE! TO START WITH, I BET HE WOULDN'T BE SO SURLY!
WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE THE REAL MR. BREED?
IT'S THE BREED CHEMICAL FERTILIZER PLANT NEAR DEATH VALLEY.
I KNOW, BUT IT'S LIKE WATER IN THE DESERT FOR ME!
WHAT?! WE'RE NOT TAKING A PICNIC OR GOING TO A NEW YEAR'S PARTY!
YEAH, BUT COULD'JA GIMME A SEC?
FEEL LIKE TAKING A DRIVE WITH ME OUT THERE?
I NEED SOME BOOZE!

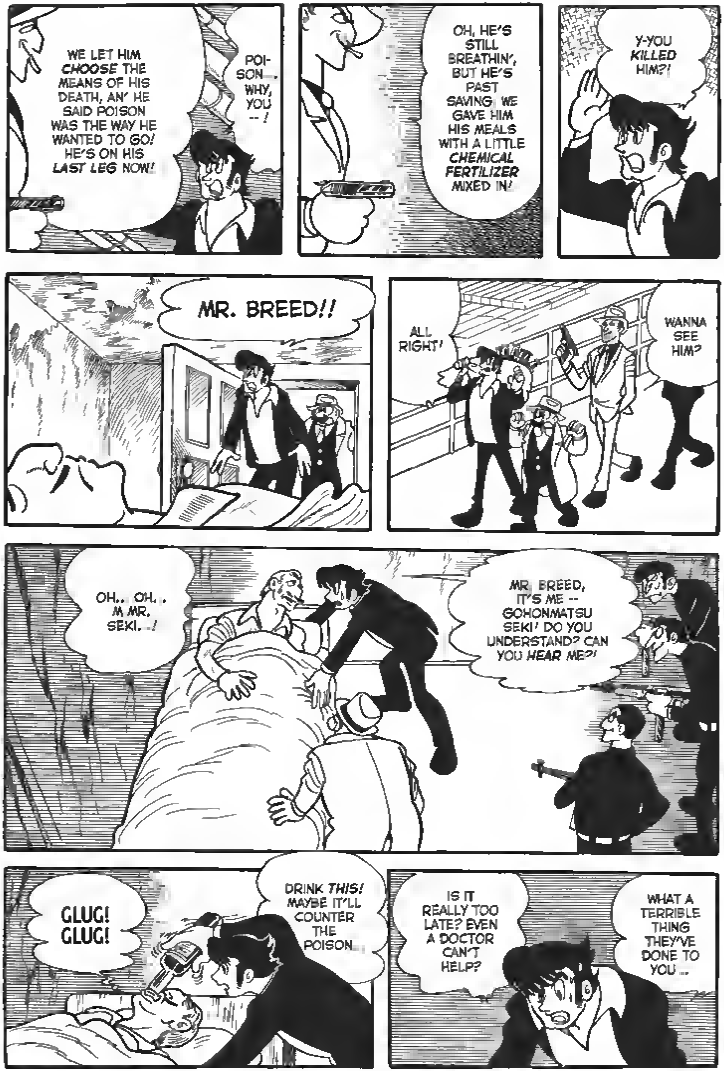

THE THING SOUNDS DRUNK!
SQURRSHH
HEY! WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CAR?
WHAT?! YOU MEAN WHISKEY GOT MIXED WITH THE GAS?!
ACK! HALF A DOZEN BOTTLES BROKE BACK HERE!


NOW IT'S TAKING A LEAK!
WE'LL WALK!
FCH!
IF THEY SEE YOU, WE'RE IN TROUBLE. WE'D BETTER NOT GO IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. .
THAT'S BREED'S FACTORY!
WE'LL SNEAK IN THROUGH THE SEWER DRAIN!
THIS IS THE LAST PLACE WE WANT TO BE STAGGERING ALONG!


OF COURSE NOT!
WON'T WE COME OUT THROUGH A TOILET?
WHAT DO YOU SEE, INSPECTOR?
ER, JUST... AH..
YIPE!
EEEK!
YOW!!
INSPECTOR MULLIGAN, L.A.P.D.! I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU! HAVE YOU SEEN MR. BREED IN THIS FACTORY?
BOY, WHAT A BOD!
GOOD! SHOW US THE WAY.
IF YOU MEAN THAT MAN LOCKED IN THE WAREHOUSE... THEN I'VE SEEN HIM.
STOP PUSHING... I DON'T WANT TO COME OUT YET!


SEKI! LOOK AT THAT!! WHY, IT'S ALL SOLID GOLD, ISN'T IT!!
IT'S PROBABLY THE GOLD FROM MAMOO!
IN HERE, EH?
BUT.. WHY ..?
WHO KNOWS HOW MANY TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH?!
UNBELIEVABLE! THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE GOLD HERE THAN IN THE NATIONAL RESERVE!
THE WOMAN'S RUNNING AWAY!
JUST STOCKPILED HERE IN A REMOTE FACTORY...? WHY NOT IN A BANK, OR SOMEPLACE LIKE THAT? WHY IS IT SITTING HERE, WITH NO SECURITY IN SIGHT?
WHY ...?

GET A HOLD OF YOUR-SELF...!
GOLD... GOLD.. G-O-L-D.... FFFHHH...
ALL THAT GOLD... JUST LYING THERE... WHAT ARE THEY PLANNING TO DO WITH IT...?
FORGET ABOUT HER... MY HEAD FEELS FUNNY...
HANDS UP, BOTH OF YOU.. AN' THE GUMSHOE CAN THROW DOWN THAT PISTOL!
IT'S GOLD FEVER!
I-I'M DAZED, TOO!
UHH...
THE GUY IN L.A. IS AN IMPOSTER, ISN'T HE?
YEAH? WHAT MAKES YOU THINK HE'S HERE?
COME TO STEAL THE GOLD, EH? CRAWLIN' THROUGH THE DRAIN LIKE A COUPLE O' RATS..!
WE'RE NOT HERE FOR THE GOLD.. WE'RE LOOKING FOR MR BREED.
BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, YOU'RE TOO LATE!
I SEE... YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.. THE REAL BREED IS HERE..

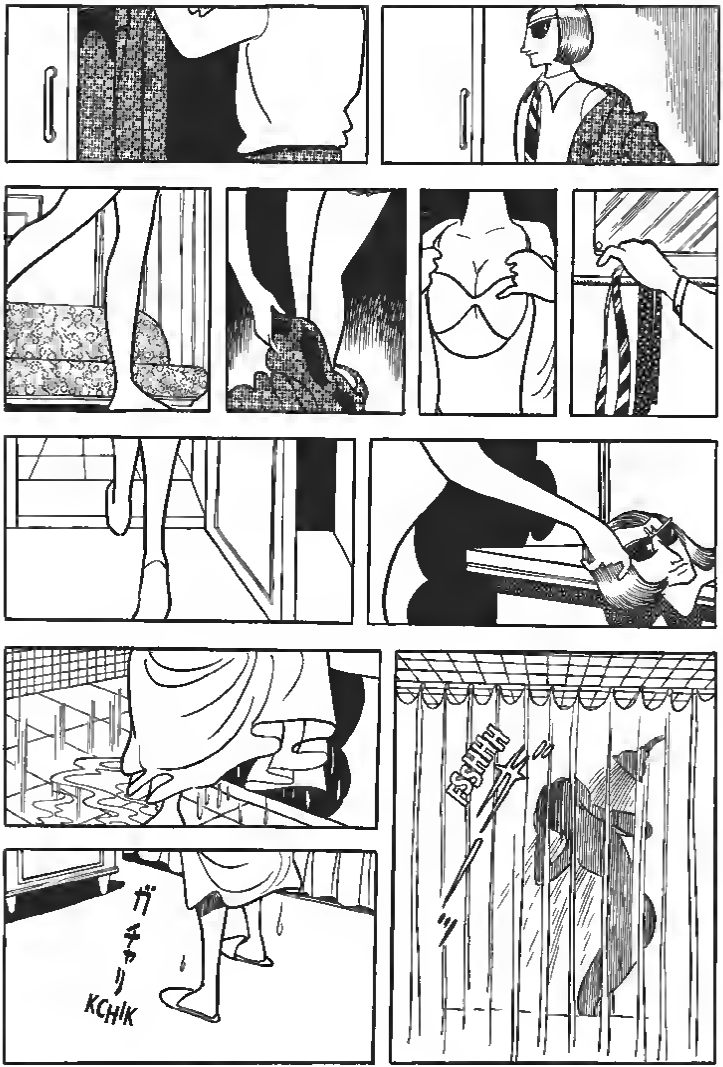

WE LET HIM CHOOSE THE MEANS OF HIS DEATH, AN' HE SAID POISON WAS THE WAY HE WANTED TO GO! HE'S ON HIS LAST LEG NOW!
POI-SON... WHY, YOU --!
OH, HE'S STILL BREATHIN', BUT HE'S PAST SAVING. WE GAVE HIM HIS MEALS WITH A LITTLE CHEMICAL FERTILIZER MIXED IN!
Y-YOU KILLED HIM?!
MR. BREED!!
ALL RIGHT!
WANNA SEE HIM?
OH.. OH.. M-MR. SEKI...!
MR. BREED, IT'S ME -- GOHONMATSU SEKI! DO YOU UNDERSTAND? CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
GLUG! GLUG!
DRINK THIS! MAYBE IT'LL COUNTER THE POISON...
IS IT REALLY TOO LATE? EVEN A DOCTOR CAN'T HELP?
WHAT A TERRIBLE THING THEY'VE DONE TO YOU...

THAT'S NO USE NOW!
KPONG
AND ONE MORE THING... TH ..THE GOLD... ZEPHYRUS PLANS TO USE IT IN A MOST INCREDIBLE WAY... I GO TO THE PRESIDENT AT ONCE... TO WASHINGTON. THE WORLD IS IN GRAVE DANGER...
S...SEKI... I HAVE A LAST REQUEST OF YOU. ./ A. .ADACHIGAHARA IN JAPAN . I BELIEVE HE'S MANUFACTURING A NEW SYNTHETIC SKIN... T-TELL HIM HE MUST STOP IMMEDIATELY! IT'S A PART OF ZEPHYRUS'S CONSPIRACY. .
...
WHY, YOU -- !!
THAT'S ALL FOR HIM!
LOCK 'EM DOWN-STAIRS! WE'LL FINISH 'EM LATER!
AN' WHEN THE TIME COMES, WE'LL LET YOU CHOOSE HOW YOU WANNA GO, TOO!
YOU'LL BE JOININ' HIM SOON ENOUGH ..

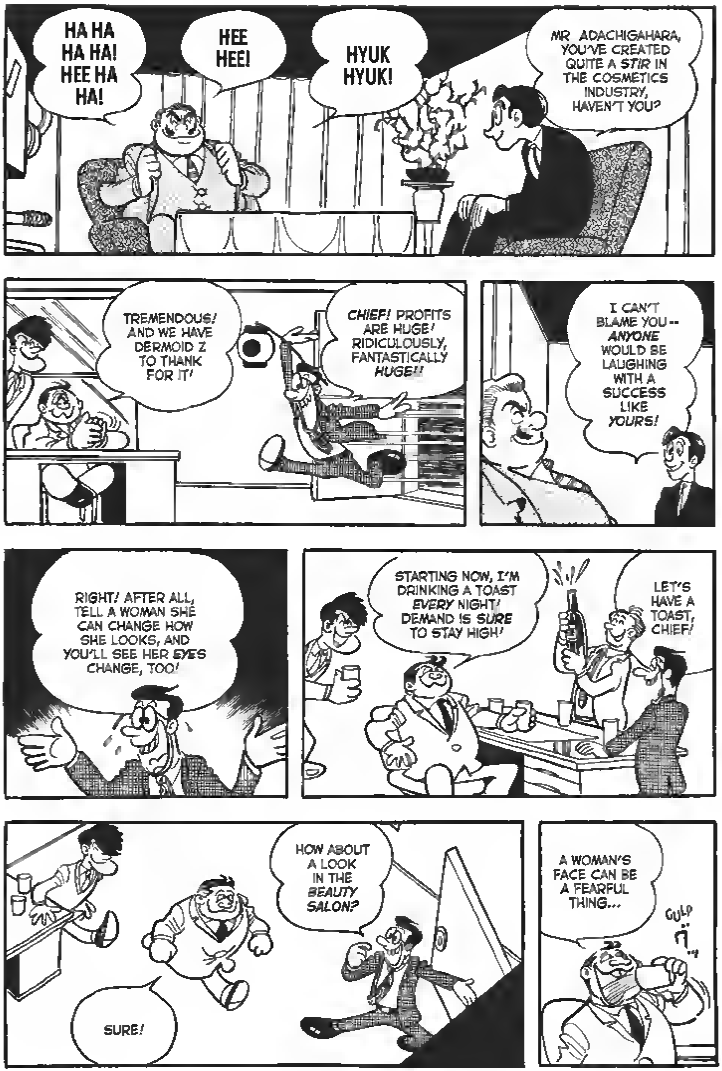
CHAPTER 11

# APPROACH TO VARIATION

WELCOME BACK, MR CHRITOS!
TOKYO, JAPAN.


SSHHH
ガチャリ
KCHIK

HOTEL OMURA, ROOM 321 PLEASE.
'ALLO...?
ZEPHYRUS, IT'S ME.
AT THIS RATE, OUR ARTIFICIAL SKIN WILL BE EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD WITHIN A YEAR.
AS PREDICTED, DERMOID Z HAS BECOME A SUCCESS.
THE SYNTHETIC SKIN MASK "DERMOID Z," WHICH RECENTLY HIT THE MARKET, HAS SUDDENLY BECOME A LUXURY SENSATION WITH THE LADIES!
WHEN IT GOES INTO MASS PRODUCTION, CURRENT SYSTEMS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT WILL BECOME USELESS..
AT THE CENTER OF THIS EXPLOSION IS THE PRESIDENT OF ADACHIGAHARA CHEMICALS, MR KITARO ADACHIGAHARA, WHO IS WITH US HERE TODAY!
HA HA. YES..
CRIMINALS WILL LIKELY COMMIT THEIR CRIMES WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING CAUGHT.


HA HA HA HA! HEE HA HA!
HEE HEE!
HYUK HYUK!
MR. ADACHIGAHARA, YOU'VE CREATED QUITE A *STIR* IN THE COSMETICS INDUSTRY, HAVEN'T YOU?
TREMENDOUS! AND WE HAVE DERMOID Z TO THANK FOR IT!
*CHIEF!* PROFITS ARE HUGE! RIDICULOUSLY, FANTASTICALLY *HUGE!!*
I CAN'T BLAME YOU-- *ANYONE* WOULD BE LAUGHING WITH A SUCCESS LIKE *YOURS!*
RIGHT! AFTER ALL, TELL A WOMAN SHE CAN CHANGE HOW SHE LOOKS, AND YOU'LL SEE HER *EYES* CHANGE, TOO!
STARTING NOW, I'M DRINKING A TOAST *EVERY* NIGHT! DEMAND IS *SURE* TO STAY HIGH!
LET'S HAVE A TOAST, CHIEF!
HOW ABOUT A LOOK IN THE *BEAUTY SALON?*
SURE!
A WOMAN'S FACE CAN BE A FEARFUL THING...
GULP

I'D LIKE A FACE THAT'S A MIX OF TAYLOR, HEPBURN AND VENUS, ALL RIGHT?
YES, MADAM. NOW, ALLOW ME TO TAKE A MOLD...
HEE HEE HEE... LOOK AT 'EM GO!
ADACH BEAUT SALO
I'M SORRY, THERE'S A WAITING LIST FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS...!
CAN'T I GET ONE NOW?! I'LL PAY WHATEVER YOU WANT...!
I'M THREE-AND-A-HALF YEARS AHEAD OF HER!
RESERVATION NUMBER 1128, PLEASE COME INSIDE!!
KNK-T-T-P
HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR A MOMENT... THIS WILL BE A BIT HOT!
NOW, THEN... PLEASE RETURN IN AN HOUR! WE'LL APPRECIATE YOUR PAYMENT TODAY!
PHEW!?
ONE... TWO.. THREE... FOUR... FIVE.. SIX .. SEVEN...
ACK!!
SPLOOCH
T-T-T-T

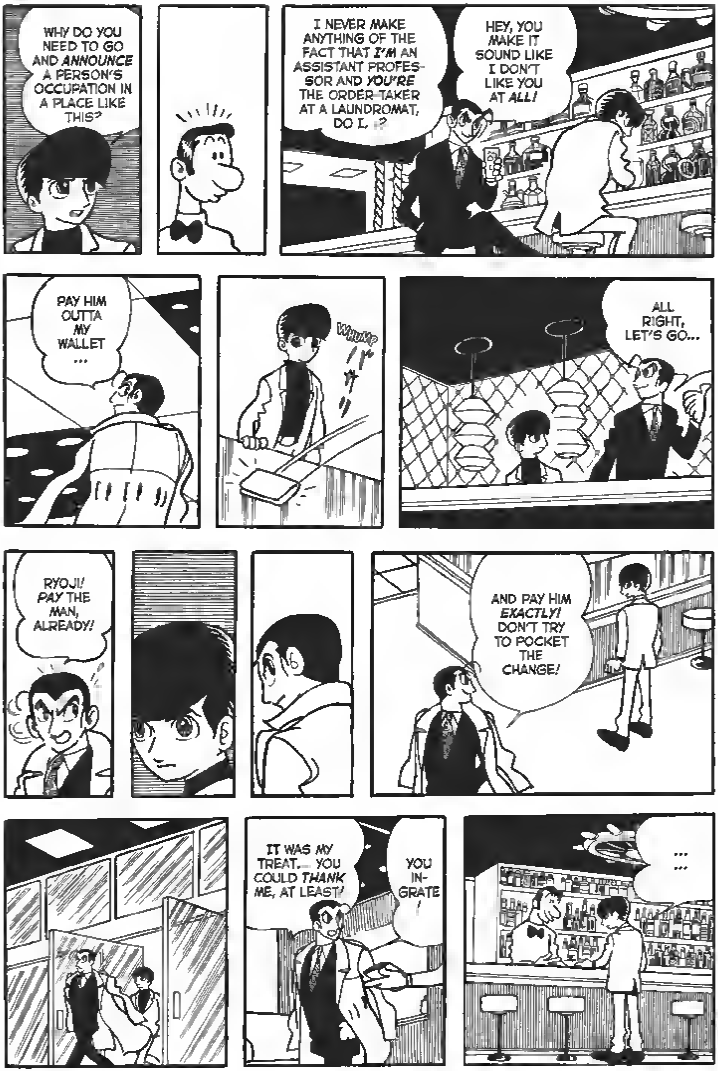
WILL TAKE TIME TO CREATE!
BUT SOMETHING MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN VENUS...
YES, EVERYONE SAYS THAT!
I WANT A FACE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE ONE SHE'S GETTING!
SOUNDS GOOD! CAN I TRY IT?
IT WAS DESIGNED BY YOKO TADANORI!
THIS ONE'S PRE-MADE...
I'VE GOT PLANS! I NEED IT IN A HURRY!
AIEEE!!
HERE'S A MIRROR...

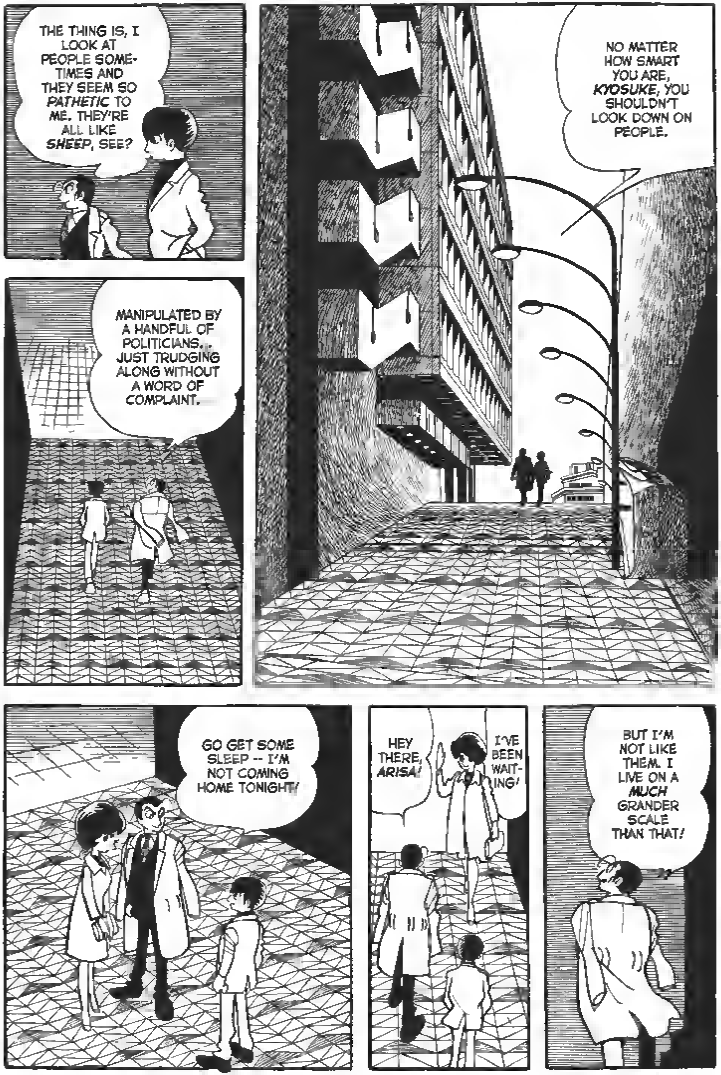
CHAPTER 12

# SCHERZO

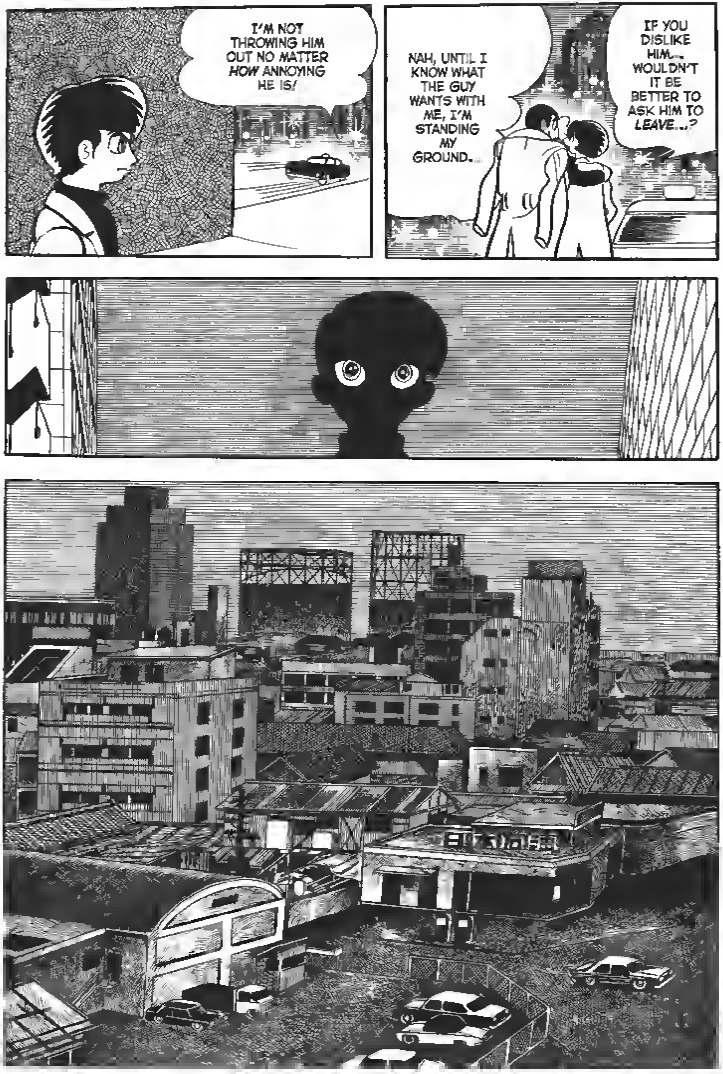
MIGHT SIMPLY HAVE BEEN LAUGHED OFF AS PREPOSTER-OUS.
THE INCIDENT RELATED HERE IS OF A CRIME, THAT, IF IT HAD HAPPENED ONE YEAR EARLIER...
BAR
HERE, TWO YOUNG MEN TAKE THE STAGE... READ ON, AND YOU WILL SOON UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM...
WITHOUT DERMOID Z, IT'S POSSIBLE THAT SUCH A CRIME WOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN PLACE.
NEC
SONY

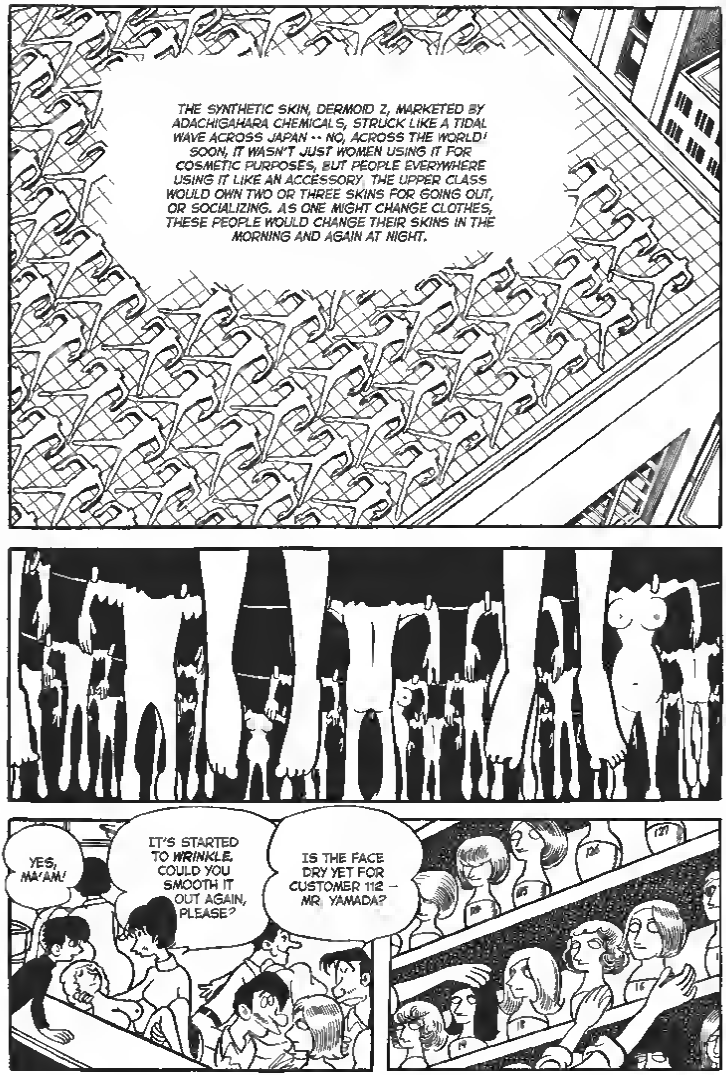
BUT YOU DON'T SEEM PARTICULARLY DISCONTENT.
YOU'RE JUST AN AVERAGE GUY IN AN AVERAGE WORLD...
YOU'RE SO HELPLESS AND BROKE, RYOJI, IT'S NO WONDER THERE ISN'T A SINGLE REMARKABLE THING ABOUT YOU
YOU'D THINK I'D BE HAPPY...
WOMEN AT MY BECK AND CALL...
I'VE GOT EVERYTHING I COULD WANT! A GREAT JOB...
ME, I GRADUATED FROM TODAI* AND NOW I'M AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
*TOKYO IMPERIAL U.
YOU LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE, EH? YOU'RE SATISFIED!
..., ...I DON'T..
BUT I'M COMPLETELY UNSATISFIED
FOR SOME REASON, I TEND TO BE ANGRY AND IRRITABLE.
SO WHAT'S MY PROBLEM? DO YOU KNOW?
I DOUBT YOU'D TAKE IT SERIOUSLY, ANYWAY.
BUT EVEN IF I GAVE YOU MY OPINION, .


WHY DO YOU NEED TO GO AND *ANNOUNCE* A PERSON'S OCCUPATION IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
I NEVER MAKE ANYTHING OF THE FACT THAT *I'M* AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND *YOU'RE* THE ORDER-TAKER AT A LAUNDROMAT, DO I...?
HEY, YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE I DON'T LIKE YOU AT *ALL!*
PAY HIM OUTTA *MY* WALLET ...
WHOOSH
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO...
RYOJI! *PAY* THE MAN, ALREADY!
AND PAY HIM *EXACTLY!* DON'T TRY TO POCKET THE CHANGE!
IT WAS *MY* TREAT... YOU COULD *THANK* ME, AT LEAST!
YOU IN-GRATE!
...
...

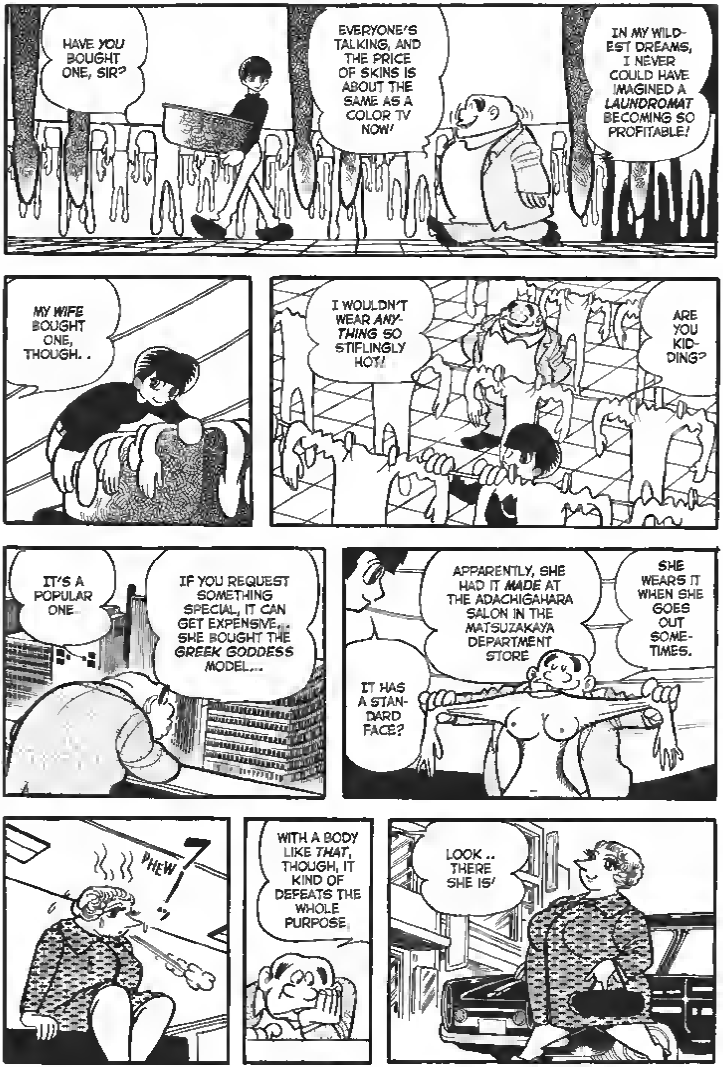

THE THING IS, I LOOK AT PEOPLE SOMETIMES AND THEY SEEM SO *PATHETIC* TO ME. THEY'RE ALL LIKE *SHEEP*, SEE?
NO MATTER HOW SMART YOU ARE, *KYOSUKE*, YOU SHOULDN'T LOOK DOWN ON PEOPLE.
MANIPULATED BY A HANDFUL OF POLITICIANS... JUST TRUDGING ALONG WITHOUT A WORD OF COMPLAINT.
GO GET SOME SLEEP -- I'M NOT COMING HOME TONIGHT!
HEY THERE, *ARISA*!
I'VE BEEN WAITING!
BUT I'M NOT LIKE THEM. I LIVE ON A *MUCH* GRANDER SCALE THAN THAT!

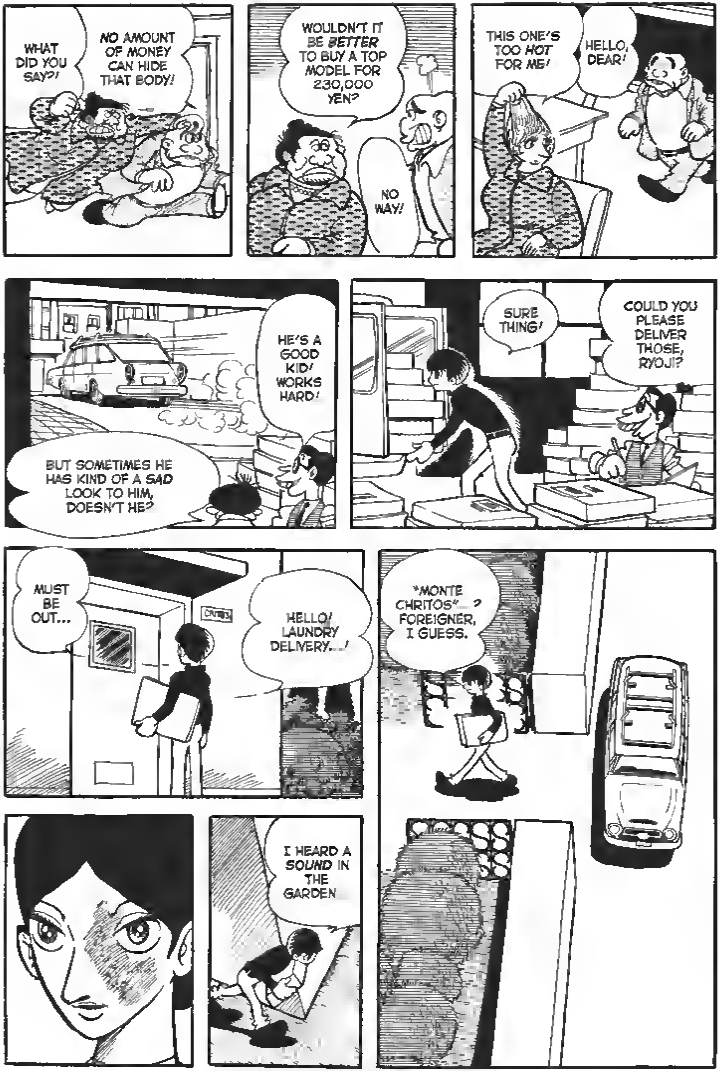
OH, CALL ADACHIGAHARA LABS FOR ME AND TELL THEM THE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR WON'T BE IN, OKAY?
"THANK YOU FOR COMING, SIR!"
"WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU TODAY, SIR?"
GO ON -- GET OUTTA HERE!!
...
YOU TAKE ORDERS, DON'T YOU?
I'M NOT YOUR ERRAND BOY...!
THINGS HAVE BEEN EDGY BETWEEN US EVER SINCE I GET A KICK OUT OF HARASSING HIM!
SEE, HE CAME TO ME LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO STAY ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO. I LET HIM BECAUSE WE'RE FROM THE SAME HOMETOWN... BUT HE'S GOT SOME WEIRD HOSTILITY IN HIS EYES!
HEH HEH HEH... WHAT DO I CARE?
HOW CAN YOU TREAT HIM SO TERRIBLY...? HE'S YOUR ROOMMATE, ISN'T HE?

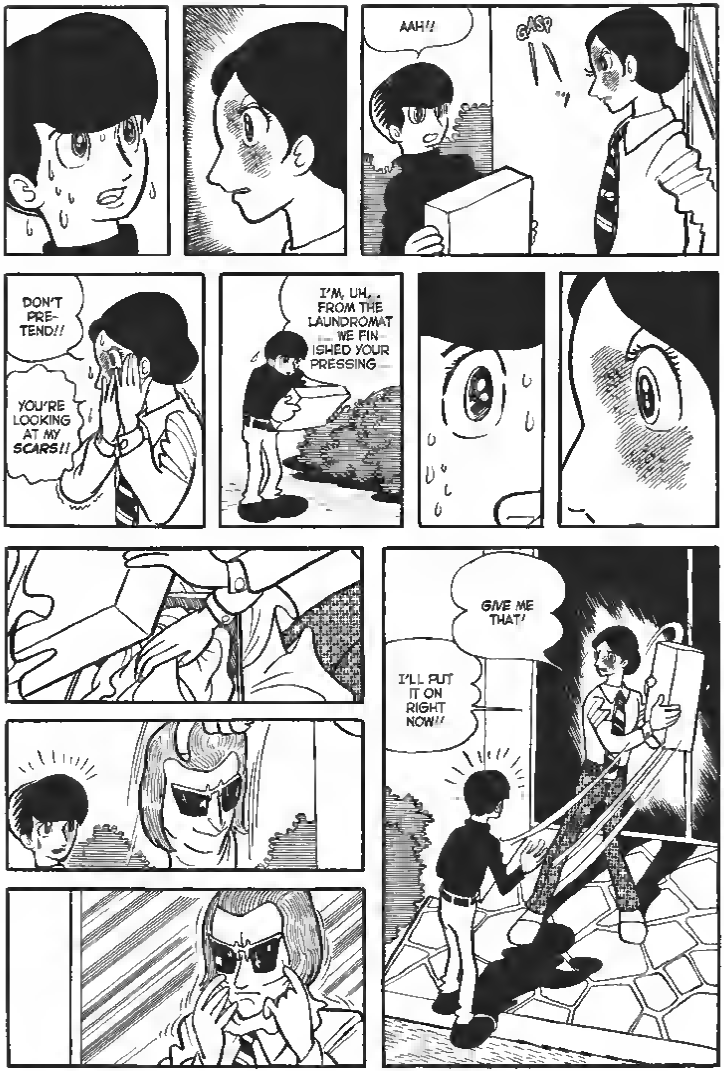

I'M NOT THROWING HIM OUT NO MATTER *HOW* ANNOYING HE IS!
NAH, UNTIL I KNOW WHAT THE GUY WANTS WITH ME, I'M STANDING MY GROUND.
IF YOU DISLIKE HIM... WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO ASK HIM TO *LEAVE*...?


THE SYNTHETIC SKIN, DERMOID Z, MARKETED BY ADACHIGAHARA CHEMICALS, STRUCK LIKE A TIDAL WAVE ACROSS JAPAN -- NO, ACROSS THE WORLD! SOON, IT WASN'T JUST WOMEN USING IT FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES, BUT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE USING IT LIKE AN ACCESSORY. THE UPPER CLASS WOULD OWN TWO OR THREE SKINS FOR GOING OUT, OR SOCIALIZING, AS ONE MIGHT CHANGE CLOTHES, THESE PEOPLE WOULD CHANGE THEIR SKINS IN THE MORNING AND AGAIN AT NIGHT.
YES, MA'AM!
IT'S STARTED TO WRINKLE. COULD YOU SMOOTH IT OUT AGAIN, PLEASE?
IS THE FACE DRY YET FOR CUSTOMER 112 — MR. YAMADA?

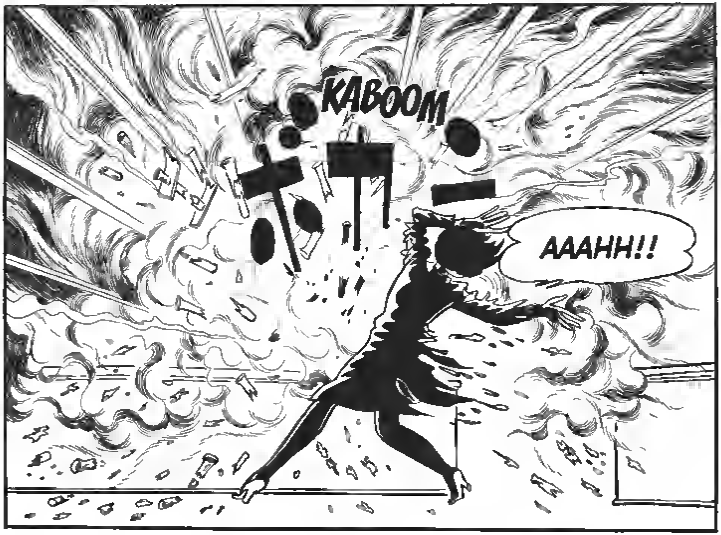
LOOK, THIS SHOP WAS THE VERY FIRST ONE TO START CLEANING SYNTHETIC SKINS! I'M A TRAILBLAZER!
YES, SIR . . .!
IT'S BECOME BIG BUSINESS NOW!
WE GOT A LOT IN TODAY, BOSS!
I KEEP TELLING YOU -- CALL ME "SIR"!
HEY, SABU! YOU WON'T GET THE WRINKLES OUT IRONING LIKE THAT!
THERE'S A KNACK TO WASHING THESE SKINS, SEE?
RIGHT, SIR!
BUT THE MAIN THING, RYOJI, IS THAT THEY BECAME SO FASHIONABLE!
FEH! HE YAPS PLENTY!
KUSA! QUIT YAPPING AND STEP TO IT!
HOW UGLY WOULD YOU HAVE TO BE TO WEAR SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
LOOK AT THIS FACE

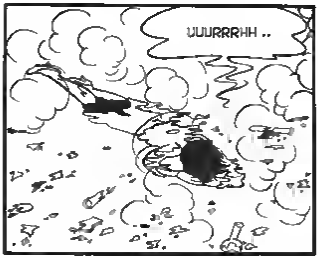

HAVE YOU BOUGHT ONE, SIR?
EVERYONE'S TALKING, AND THE PRICE OF SKINS IS ABOUT THE SAME AS A COLOR TV NOW!
IN MY WILDEST DREAMS, I NEVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED A LAUNDROMAT BECOMING SO PROFITABLE!
MY WIFE BOUGHT ONE, THOUGH..
I WOULDN'T WEAR ANYTHING SO STIFLINGLY HOT!
ARE YOU KIDDING?
IT'S A POPULAR ONE.
IF YOU REQUEST SOMETHING SPECIAL, IT CAN GET EXPENSIVE... SHE BOUGHT THE GREEK GODDESS MODEL...
APPARENTLY, SHE HAD IT MADE AT THE ADACHIGAHARA SALON IN THE MATSUZAKAYA DEPARTMENT STORE
SHE WEARS IT WHEN SHE GOES OUT SOMETIMES.
IT HAS A STANDARD FACE?
PHEW!
WITH A BODY LIKE THAT, THOUGH, IT KIND OF DEFEATS THE WHOLE PURPOSE.
LOOK.. THERE SHE IS!

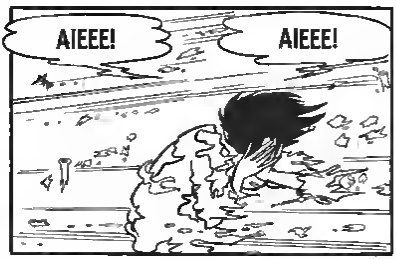

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
NO AMOUNT OF MONEY CAN HIDE THAT BODY!
WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO BUY A TOP MODEL FOR 230,000 YEN?
NO WAY!
THIS ONE'S TOO HOT FOR ME!
HELLO, DEAR!
HE'S A GOOD KID! WORKS HARD!
BUT SOMETIMES HE HAS KIND OF A SAD LOOK TO HIM, DOESN'T HE?
SURE THING!
COULD YOU PLEASE DELIVER THOSE, RYOJI?
MUST BE OUT...
HELLO! LAUNDRY DELIVERY...!
"MONTE CHRITOS"...? FOREIGNER, I GUESS.
I HEARD A SOUND IN THE GARDEN

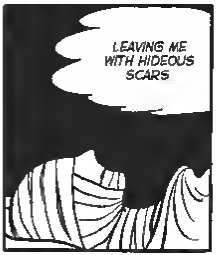

AAH!!
GASP
DON'T PRE-TEND!!
YOU'RE LOOKING AT MY SCARS!!
I'M, UH... FROM THE LAUNDROMAT — WE FIN-ISHED YOUR PRESSING —
GIVE ME THAT!
I'LL PUT IT ON RIGHT NOW!!

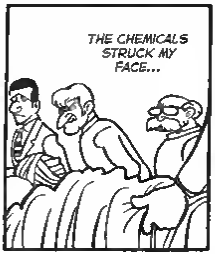
WAIT RIGHT THERE!
JUMP
ALL RIGHT ?
IF YOU DON'T *TELL* ANYONE THAT I'M A WOMAN
I'LL FORGIVE YOU FOR ENTERING MY GARDEN WITHOUT PERMISSION...
N... NO, MR CHRITOS ...!
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW I *GOT* THEM?
THE SCARS ARE *HIDEOUS*, AREN'T THEY?
EVEN IF THE SCARRING CAN BE REPAIRED, THE WOUNDS ON *MY HEART* WILL NEVER HEAL!
BUT I'VE *CHOSEN* NOT TO
I COULD HAVE COSMETIC SURGERY...
THOUGH IT MAY MEAN NOTHING TO HEAR IT... IT WAS A LOVE I'D DEDICATED MY *LIFE* TO.
HE WAS A YOUNG MAN IN THE LAB..
THERE, I FELL MADLY IN *LOVE!*
*THEN, ONE DAY, THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT*
HOW MANY YEARS AGO WAS IT NOW, I WONDER.. ? I WAS EMPLOYED AT A LABORATORY IN MY HOME COUNTRY...

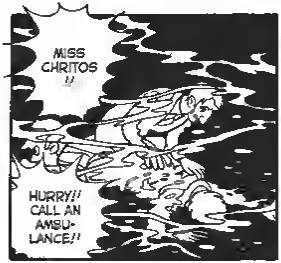

KABOOM
AAAHH!!


UUURRRHH ..


AIEEE!
AIEEE!


LEAVING ME WITH HIDEOUS SCARS

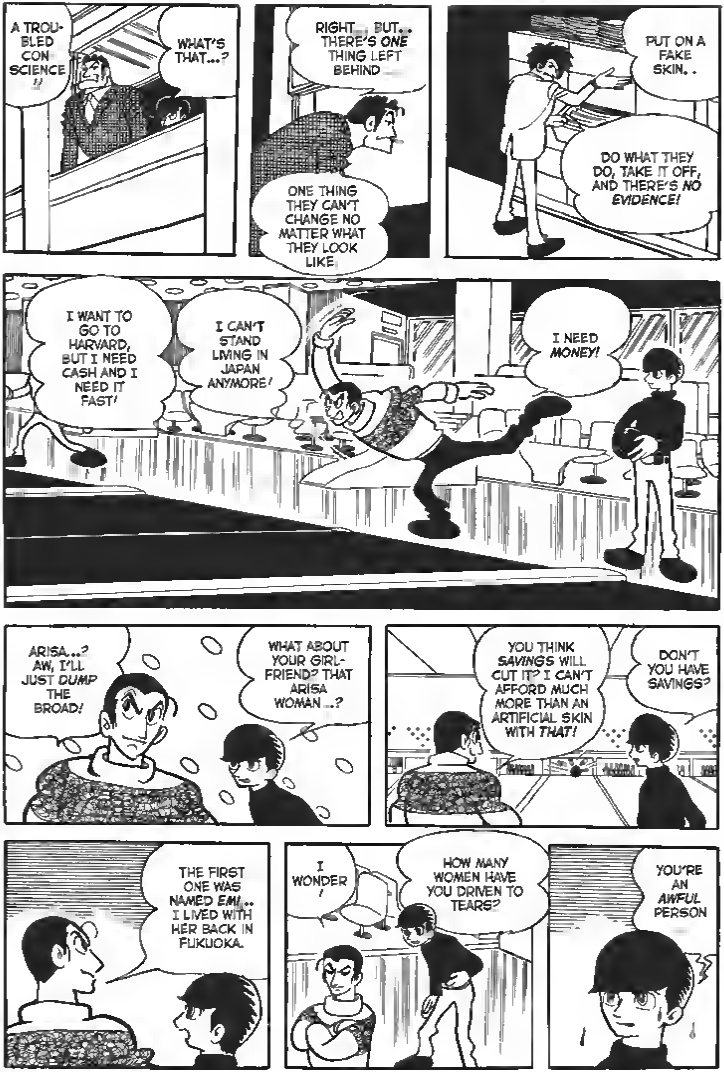

THE CHEMICALS STRUCK MY FACE...


MISS CHRITOS !!
HURRY!! CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!!

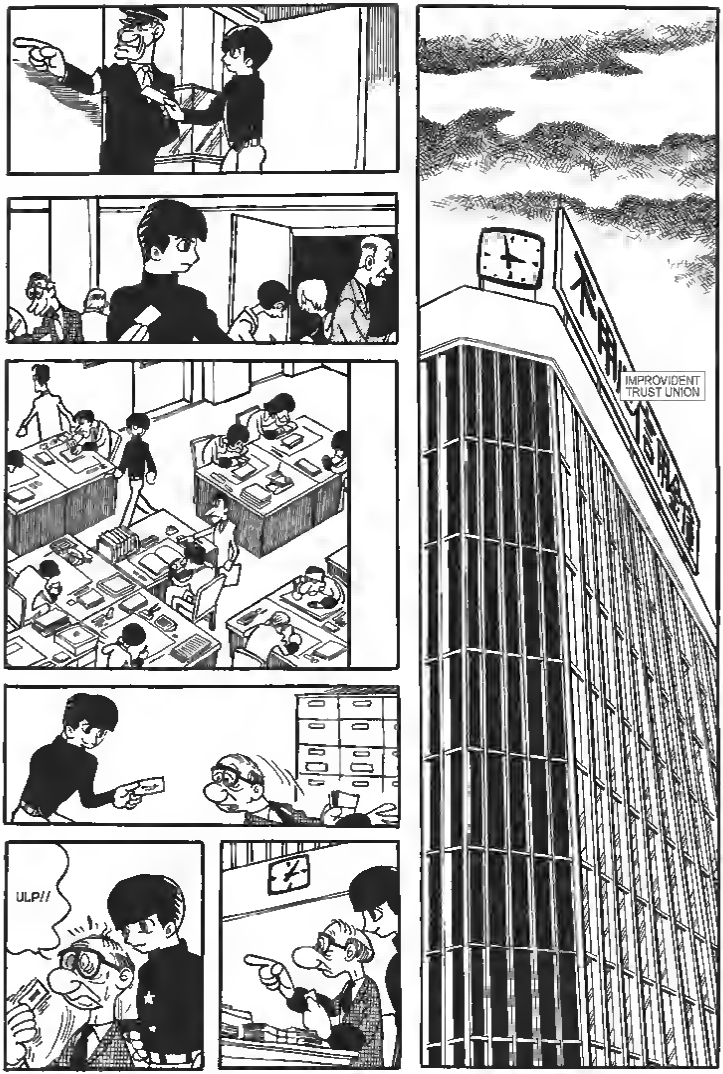
LEFT ME AND MARRIED ANOTHER WOMAN.
MY LOVER ...
IT WAS ANOTHER WORLD, REMOVED FROM CIVILIZATION.
THERE, I QUIETLY CONTINUED MY RESEARCH.
BUT I COULDN'T END IT SO I LEFT MY COUNTRY BEHIND AND WENT TO A REMOTE ISLAND...
I LOST ALL DESIRE TO LIVE... I WANTED TO DIE...

WITH GOLD RELICS FROM THE MOO EMPIRE THAT I DISCOVERED ON THE ISLAND, I FUNDED MY RESEARCH
SO I DECIDED TO COMPLETE THE WORK ON DERMOID, MY SYNTHETIC SKIN, ON MY OWN
IN MY HOMELAND, THE LABORATORY CLOSED DOWN BECAUSE WAR HAD ERUPTED...
BECAUSE, LOOKING AT YOU I SAW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT UNDERSTAND MY TALE.
DO YOU KNOW WHY I'VE TOLD YOU ALL OF THIS?
WHEN THERE'S NOT ONE WOMAN LIKE MYSELF LEFT. .
NOW WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD BENEFIT...
THEN I'LL FINALLY BE HAPPY.
安達原ビューティ・サロン
ADACHIGAHARA BEAUTY SALON
MEANWHILE, KYOSUKE OIZUMI WAS SOMEWHERE NO ONE WOULD EXPECT HIM...
AND FOR SOME REASON... HE FELT INTENSE SYMPATHY FOR HER
RYOJI TAWARA HAD LEARNED THE ORIGINS OF MONTE CHRITOS, AND WHY SHE TRAVELED THE WORLD DISGUISED AS A MAN...
OH, A GENTLE MAN!
WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, SIR?
NEXT, PLEASE

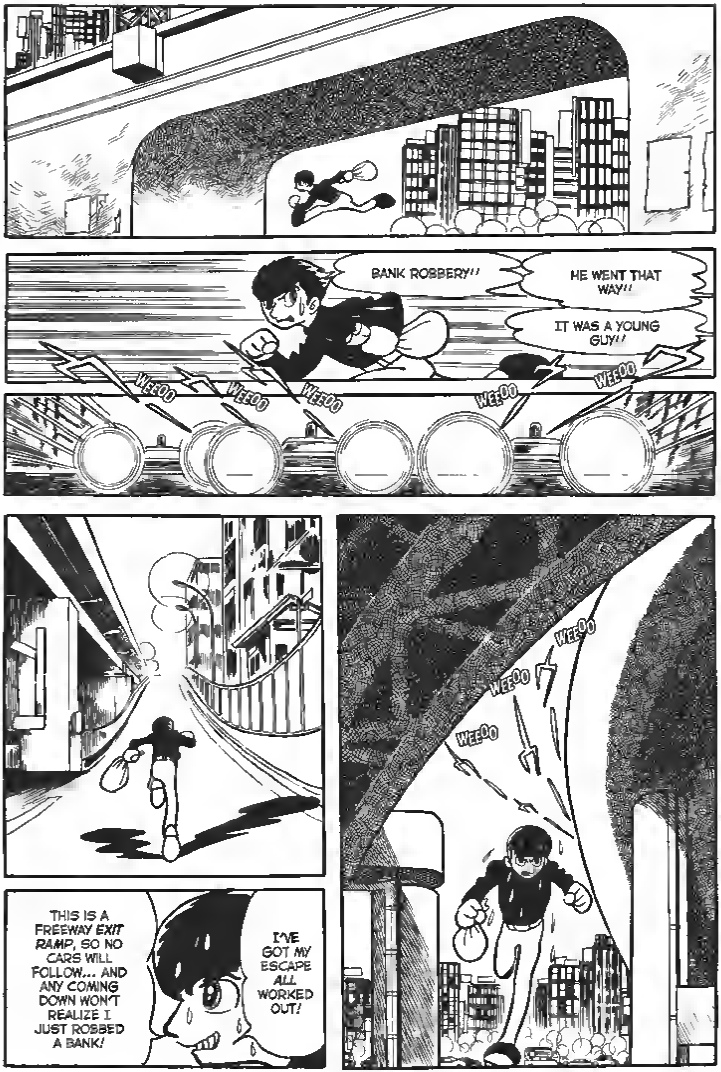
YES, SIR. ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS WOULD BE BETTER IF WE HAD MORE DETAIL...
IF IT LOOKS *SIMILAR*, THAT'LL BE GOOD ENOUGH!
FRONT
SIDE
NO. 2962-3
I WANT A FACE LIKE THIS...
VERY WELL. PLEASE RETURN IN ONE WEEK, SIR
WE NEED GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE -- A *BAN* ON THE PRODUCTION OF SYNTHETIC SKIN!
EVER SINCE THAT SYNTHETIC SKIN HIT THE MARKET, THE *CRIME RATE'S* BEEN SOARING SKY HIGH! TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, OUR ARREST RATE IS ONLY *TEN PERCENT!!*
IF IT KEEPS UP, LAW WON'T HAVE ANY MEANING!
SO-CALLED WHITE-COLLAR CRIME IS DOWN, THE *STREET CRIMINALS* ARE BRAZEN NOW, RELYING ON THE SYNTHETIC SKIN.
TO HIDE THEIR IDENTITIES
HOW'S THAT?
FUNNY THING IS, CRIMES HAVE BECOME *EASY* TO PULL OFF.

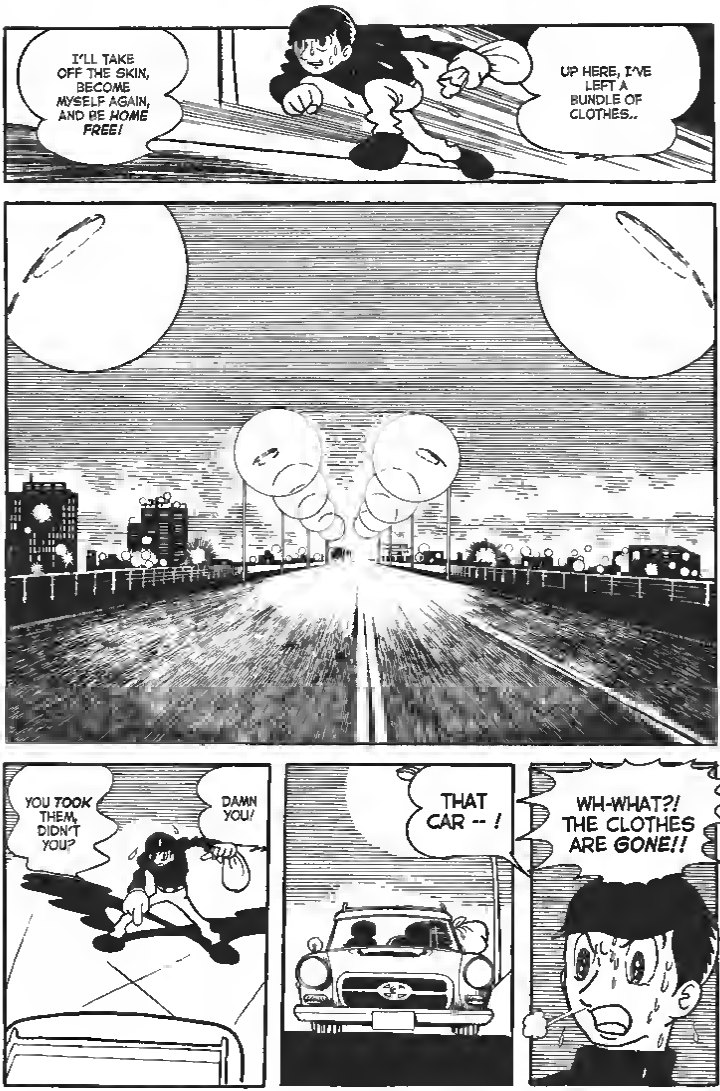

A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE ...
WHAT'S THAT...?
RIGHT... BUT... THERE'S ONE THING LEFT BEHIND...
ONE THING THEY CAN'T CHANGE NO MATTER WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE.
PUT ON A FAKE SKIN. .
DO WHAT THEY DO, TAKE IT OFF, AND THERE'S NO EVIDENCE!
I WANT TO GO TO HARVARD, BUT I NEED CASH AND I NEED IT FAST!
I CAN'T STAND LIVING IN JAPAN ANYMORE!
I NEED MONEY!
ARISA...? AW, I'LL JUST DUMP THE BROAD!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR GIRLFRIEND? THAT ARISA WOMAN ...?
YOU THINK SAVINGS WILL CUT IT? I CAN'T AFFORD MUCH MORE THAN AN ARTIFICIAL SKIN WITH THAT!
DON'T YOU HAVE SAVINGS?
THE FIRST ONE WAS NAMED EMI... I LIVED WITH HER BACK IN FUKUOKA.
I WONDER ...
HOW MANY WOMEN HAVE YOU DRIVEN TO TEARS?
YOU'RE AN AWFUL PERSON

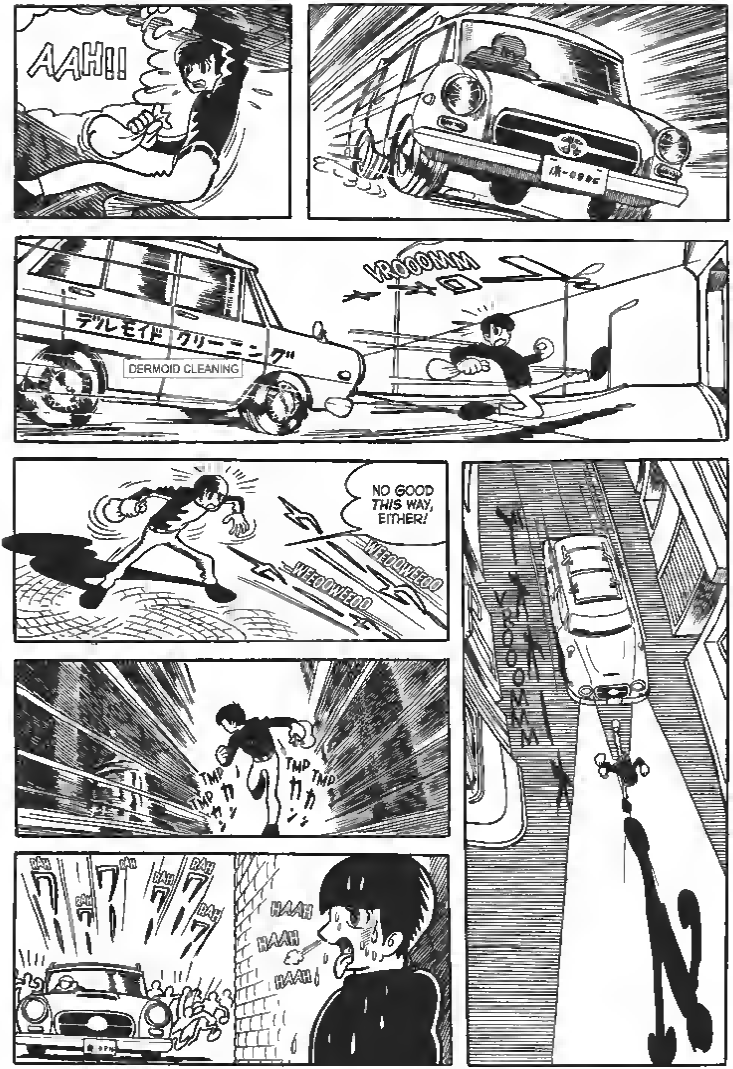
BUT IN THE END, NOT MY TYPE.
SHE WAS EASY ENOUGH TO GET ALONG WITH. . .
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU STARING AT?!
I'LL START OVER IN AMERICA. HAVE SEX WITH WHITE GIRLS. . !
Y-YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT ME. . !
JUST SEEING YOUR FACE MAKES MY BLOOD BOIL!
POW
THIS'LL FIX HIM, AND SET THINGS UP FOR ME IN AMERICA. . !
HEH HEH HEH... OH, THIS IS GOOD
HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS!
BUT I JUST NEED...
A LITTLE MORE PATIENCE!
WHY? WHY DO HIS EYES GLEAM LIKE HE'S TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING?

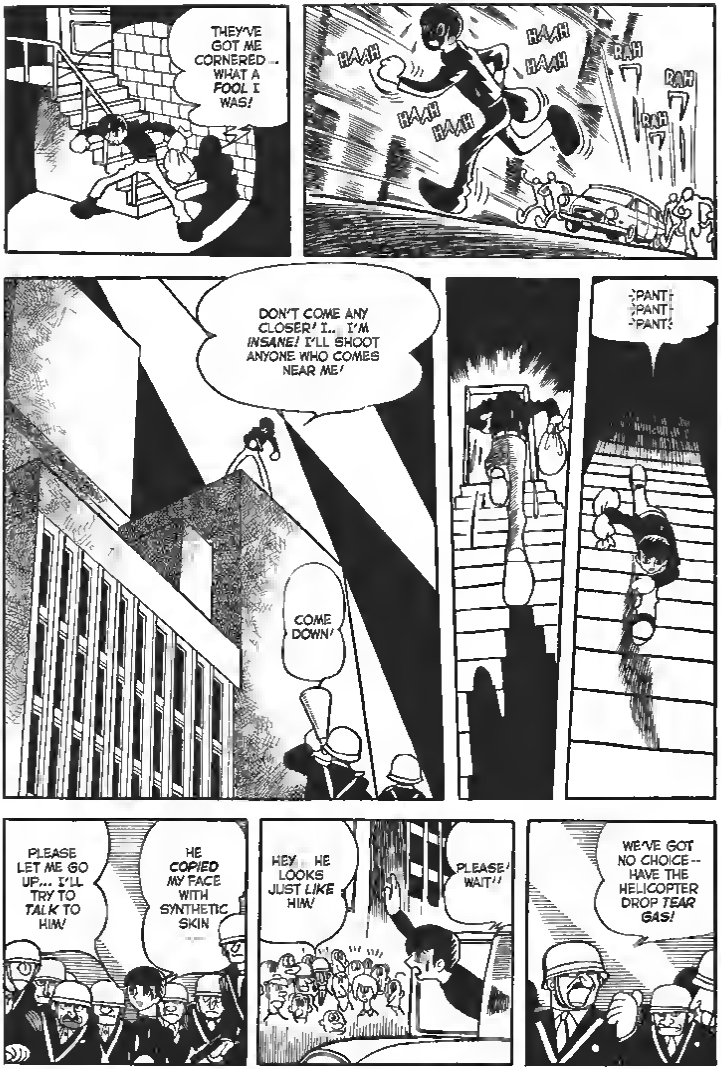

IMPROVIDENT
TRUST UNION
ULP!!

HURRY UP!!
DON'T MAKE A SOUND THE MONEY IN THE DRAWER -- ALL OF IT!
NOW MAKE LIKE WE'RE GOING TO SEE THE BRANCH MANAGER - STAND UP!
TAKE IT OUT !!
GOOD. NOW FACE AGAINST THE WALL!
HEAD FOR THE BACK EXIT! IF YOU TURN AROUND, I'LL SHOOT...!
THIEF!!
SLAM
バタン!

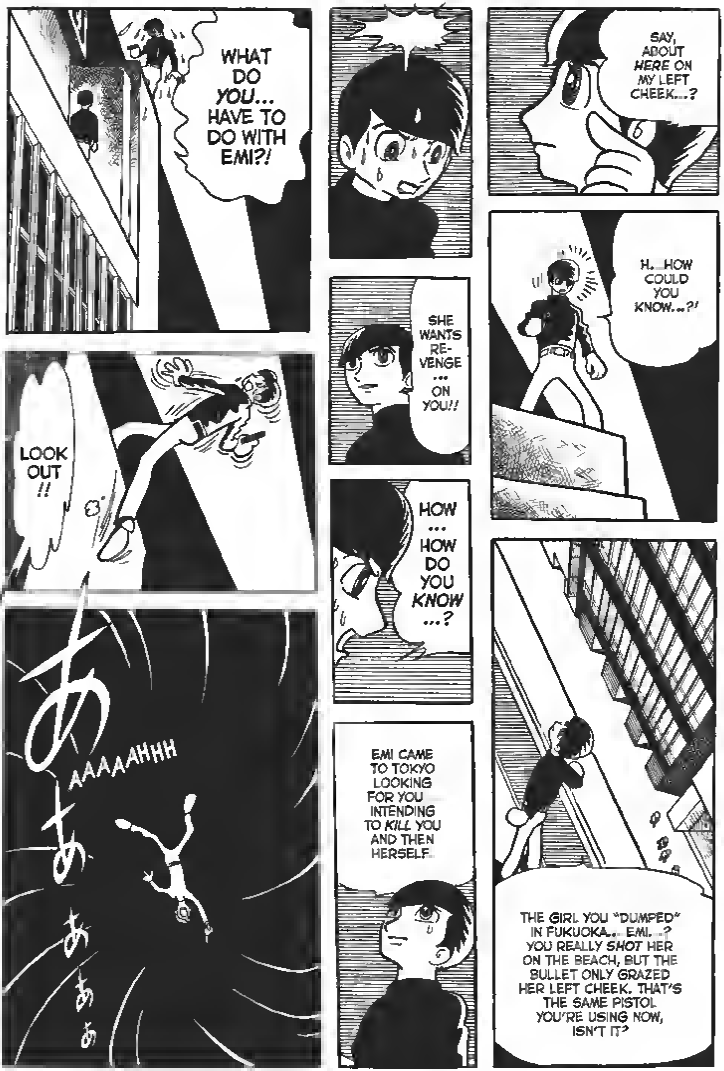

BANK ROBBERY!!
HE WENT THAT WAY!!
IT WAS A YOUNG GUY!!
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
WEE-OO
THIS IS A FREEWAY EXIT RAMP, SO NO CARS WILL FOLLOW... AND ANY COMING DOWN WON'T REALIZE I JUST ROBBED A BANK!
I'VE GOT MY ESCAPE ALL WORKED OUT!


I'LL TAKE OFF THE SKIN, BECOME MYSELF AGAIN, AND BE HOME FREE!
UP HERE, I'VE LEFT A BUNDLE OF CLOTHES..
YOU TOOK THEM, DIDN'T YOU?
DAMN YOU!
THAT CAR -- !
WH-WHAT?! THE CLOTHES ARE GONE!!


AAH!!
デルモイド クリーニング
DERMOID CLEANING
VROOOMM
NO GOOD THIS WAY, EITHER!
WEOOWEOO
WEOOWEOO
VROOMMM
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH!


THEY'VE GOT ME CORNERED -- WHAT A FOOL I WAS!
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH
DON'T COME ANY CLOSER! I... I'M INSANE! I'LL SHOOT ANYONE WHO COMES NEAR ME!
COME DOWN!
:PANT:
:PANT:
:PANT:
PLEASE LET ME GO UP... I'LL TRY TO TALK TO HIM!
HE COPIED MY FACE WITH SYNTHETIC SKIN
HEY... HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIM!
PLEASE! WAIT!
WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE -- HAVE THE HELICOPTER DROP TEAR GAS!

...YOU...!
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE UP TO SOMETHING, SO I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOU! I SAW IT ALL...
KYOSUKE! IT'S RYOJI! I'M COMING UP!!
FOR SOMEONE SO SMUG, YOU PUT TOGETHER A PRETTY FLIMSY SCHEME, DIDN'T YOU?
TO LEAVING A CHANGE OF CLOTHES ALONGSIDE THE FREEWAY!
EVERYTHING FROM SHOWING MY PICTURE AT THE SALON TO HAVE THEM MAKE YOU A SYNTHETIC SKIN...
GO AHEAD! YOU WON'T DO MORE THAN GRAZE MY CHEEK WITH THAT CHEAP PISTOL!
I'LL SHOOT!
YOU DON'T EVEN CARE IF I'M FALSELY ACCUSED OF BANK ROBBERY AND SENT TO JAIL, DO YOU?
;HMPH!- I'LL NEVER GIVE UP TO SOMEONE LIKE YOU...!
TAKE OFF THE MASK AND GIVE YOURSELF UP!


WHAT DO YOU... HAVE TO DO WITH EMI?!
SAY, ABOUT HERE ON MY LEFT CHEEK...?
H...HOW COULD YOU KNOW...?!
SHE WANTS RE-VENGE ... ON YOU!!
LOOK OUT !!
HOW ... HOW DO YOU KNOW ...?
あ
AAAAAHHH
あ
あ
あ
EMI CAME TO TOKYO LOOKING FOR YOU INTENDING TO KILL YOU AND THEN HERSELF.
THE GIRL YOU "DUMPED" IN FUKUOKA... EMI...? YOU REALLY SHOT HER ON THE BEACH, BUT THE BULLET ONLY GRAZED HER LEFT CHEEK. THAT'S THE SAME PISTOL YOU'RE USING NOW, ISN'T IT?

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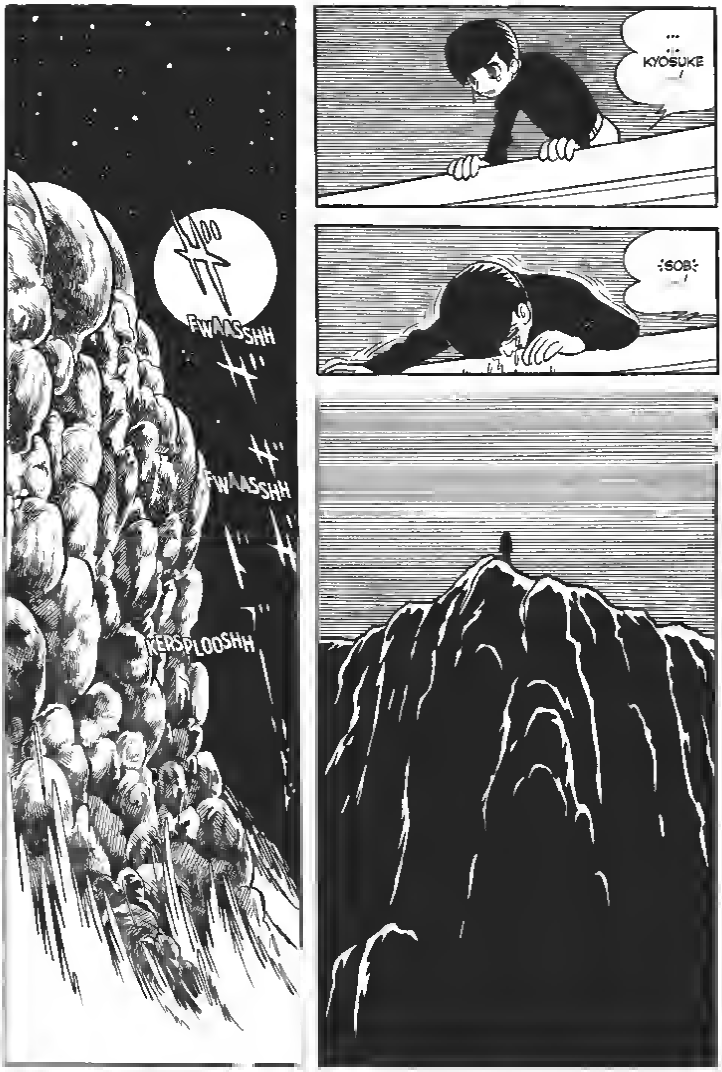
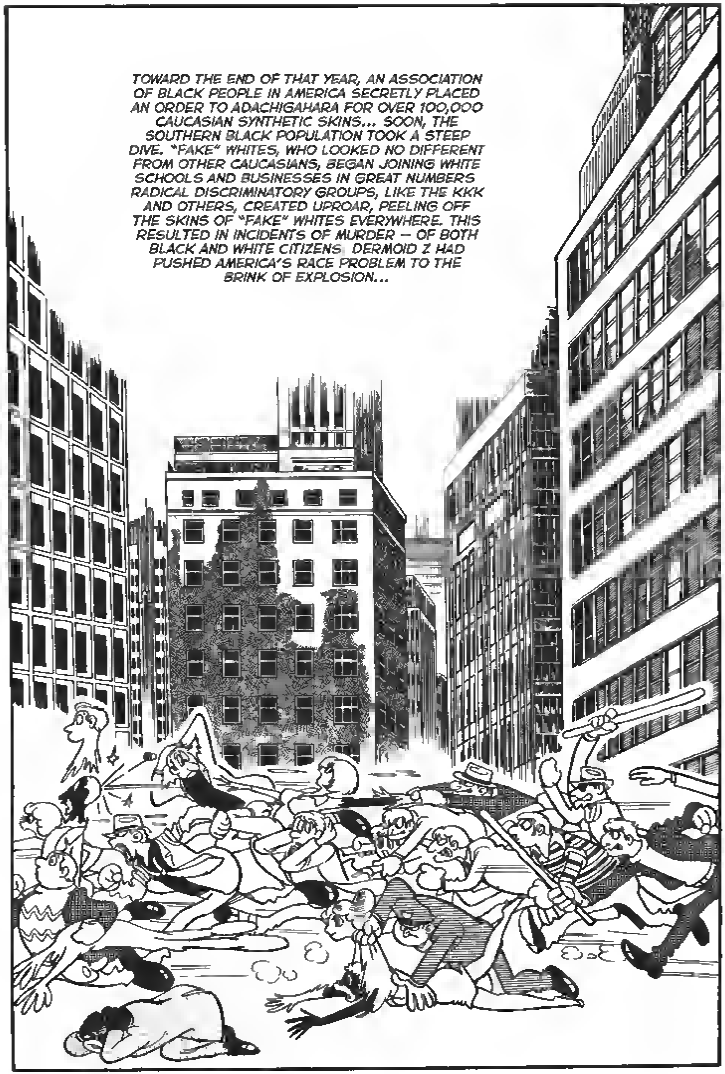
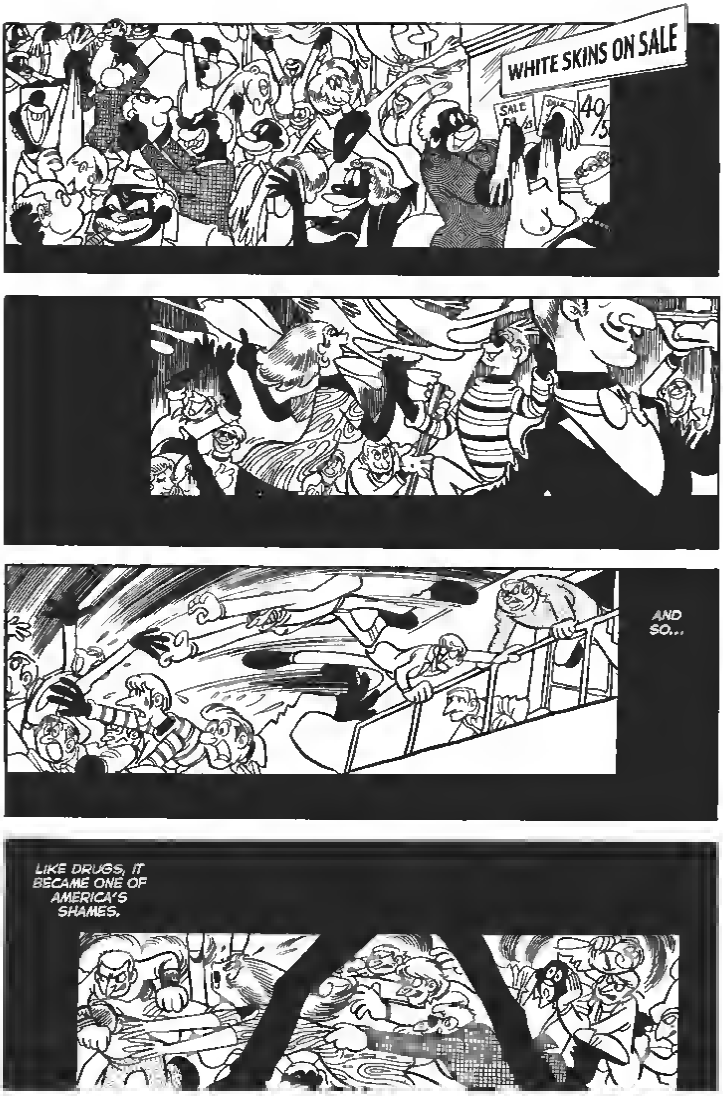

...
...
KYOSUKE
:SOB:
FWAASSHH
FWAASSHH
KERSPLOOSHH

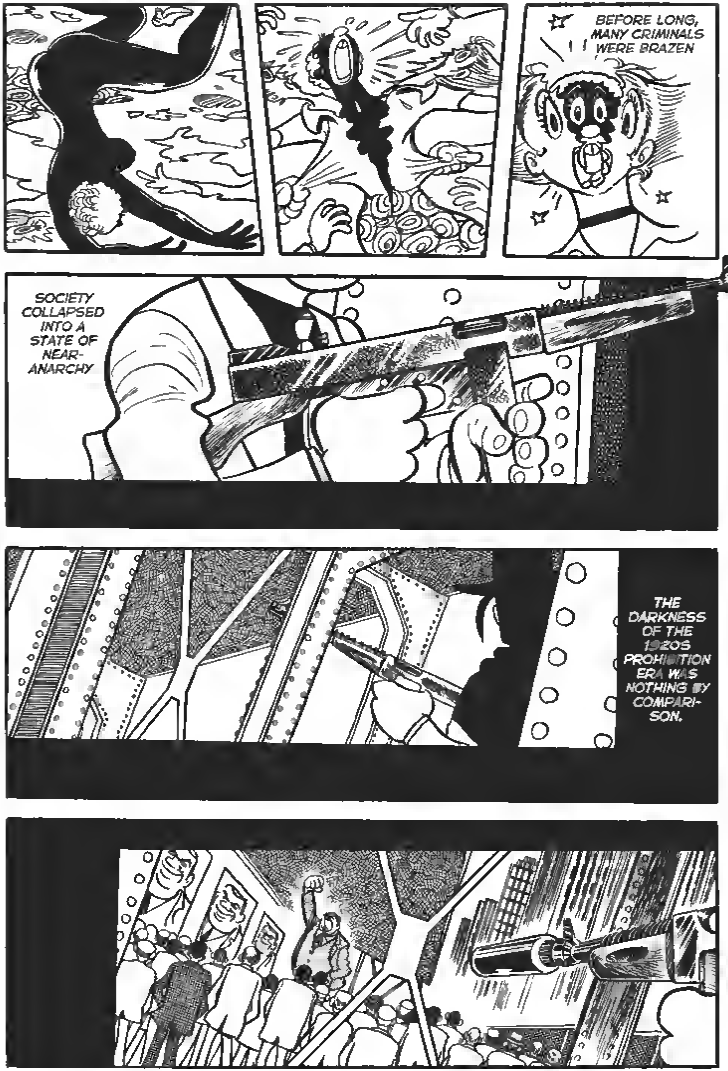
THE BODY OF A WOMAN WEARING A SYNTHETIC SKIN WASHED ASHORE ON A BEACH IN WEST IZU. CORONER'S IDENTIFIED A PROMINENT SCAR ON THE WOMAN'S LEFT CHEEK.

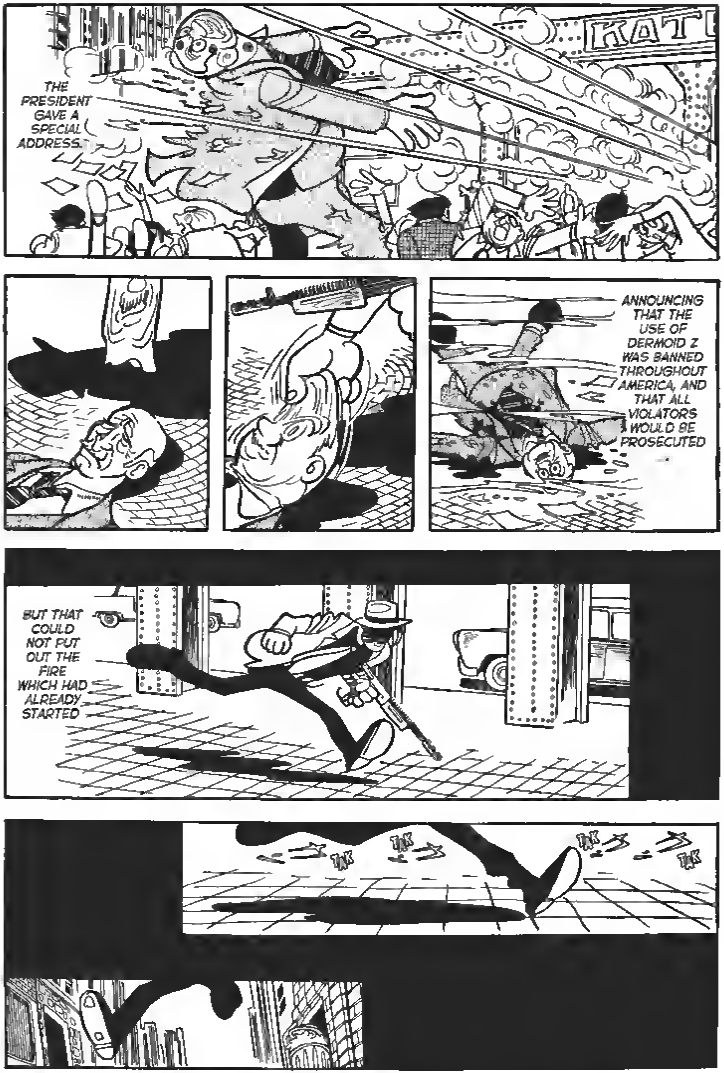
CHAPTER 13

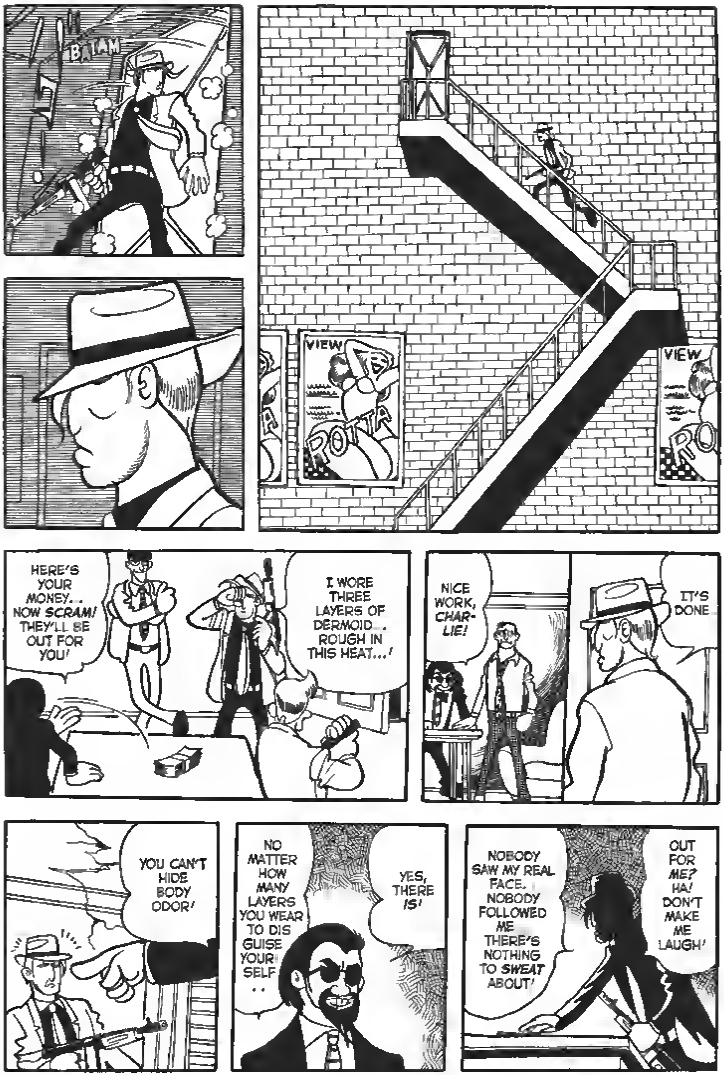
# ADAGIO MODERATO


TOWARD THE END OF THAT YEAR, AN ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PEOPLE IN AMERICA SECRETLY PLACED AN ORDER TO ADACHIGAHARA FOR OVER 100,000 CAUCASIAN SYNTHETIC SKINS... SOON, THE SOUTHERN BLACK POPULATION TOOK A STEEP DIVE. "FAKE" WHITES, WHO LOOKED NO DIFFERENT FROM OTHER CAUCASIANS, BEGAN JOINING WHITE SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES IN GREAT NUMBERS RADICAL DISCRIMINATORY GROUPS, LIKE THE KKK AND OTHERS, CREATED UPROAR, PEELING OFF THE SKINS OF "FAKE" WHITES EVERYWHERE. THIS RESULTED IN INCIDENTS OF MURDER — OF BOTH BLACK AND WHITE CITIZENS. DERMOID Z HAD PUSHED AMERICA'S RACE PROBLEM TO THE BRINK OF EXPLOSION...


WHITE SKINS ON SALE
SALE
AND SO...
LIKE DRUGS, IT BECAME ONE OF AMERICA'S SHAMES.

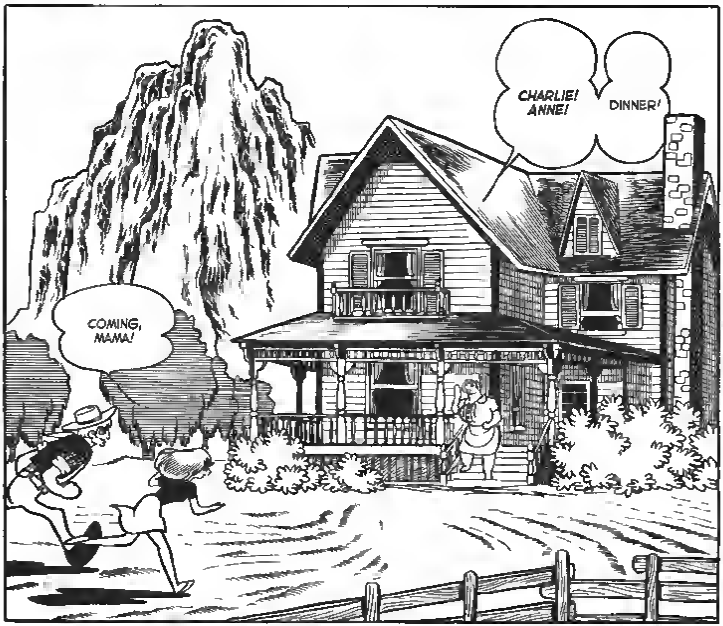

BEFORE LONG, MANY CRIMINALS WERE BRAZEN
SOCIETY COLLAPSED INTO A STATE OF NEAR-ANARCHY
THE DARKNESS OF THE 1920S PROHIBITION ERA WAS NOTHING BY COMPARISON.


THE PRESIDENT GAVE A SPECIAL ADDRESS.
ANNOUNCING THAT THE USE OF DERMOID Z WAS BANNED THROUGHOUT AMERICA, AND THAT ALL VIOLATORS WOULD BE PROSECUTED
BUT THAT COULD NOT PUT OUT THE FIRE WHICH HAD ALREADY STARTED


BAM
VIEW
VIEW
HERE'S YOUR MONEY... NOW SCRAM! THEY'LL BE OUT FOR YOU!
I WORE THREE LAYERS OF DERMOID... ROUGH IN THIS HEAT...!
NICE WORK, CHARLIE!
IT'S DONE
YOU CAN'T HIDE BODY ODOR!
NO MATTER HOW MANY LAYERS YOU WEAR TO DISGUISE YOURSELF...
YES, THERE IS!
NOBODY SAW MY REAL FACE. NOBODY FOLLOWED ME THERE'S NOTHING TO SWEAT ABOUT!
OUT FOR ME? HA! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

IT DOESN'T MATTER!
COME ON! I WENT OUTTA MY WAY TO PUT DEODORANT ON UNDER THE DERMOID!
BODY ODOR ?!
WE KNOW IT'S YOU COMING FROM A MILE AWAY!
DO I... REALLY SMELL THAT STRONG?
BUT TAKIN' A BATH'S NOT EASY WITH THE DERMOID ON
CHARLIE, YOU NEED TO TAKE A BATH EVERY DAY!
YOU'RE GIVING ME THE SACK? YOU CAN'T...!
SORRY, BUT YOU'RE OUT, CHARLIE!
IF YOU'RE HERE, IT'S BAD NEWS FOR US! YOU CAN'T HANG AROUND THE HIDEOUT ANYMORE...
I GET IT -- I'M OUT NO MATTER WHAT, HUH...?
TAKE OFF THE DERMOID, GO HIDE OUT IN THE COUNTRY, AND TAKE A GOOD, LONG BATH, CHARLIE!
THANKS TO DERMOID, OUR ASSASSIN OPERATION IS GOING STRONG... WE DON'T WANNA GET NABBED BECAUSE O' YOU!

FINE
RATATATATAT
HMPH!
GO HIDE OUT IN THE COUNTRY, EH...?
VRROOMM

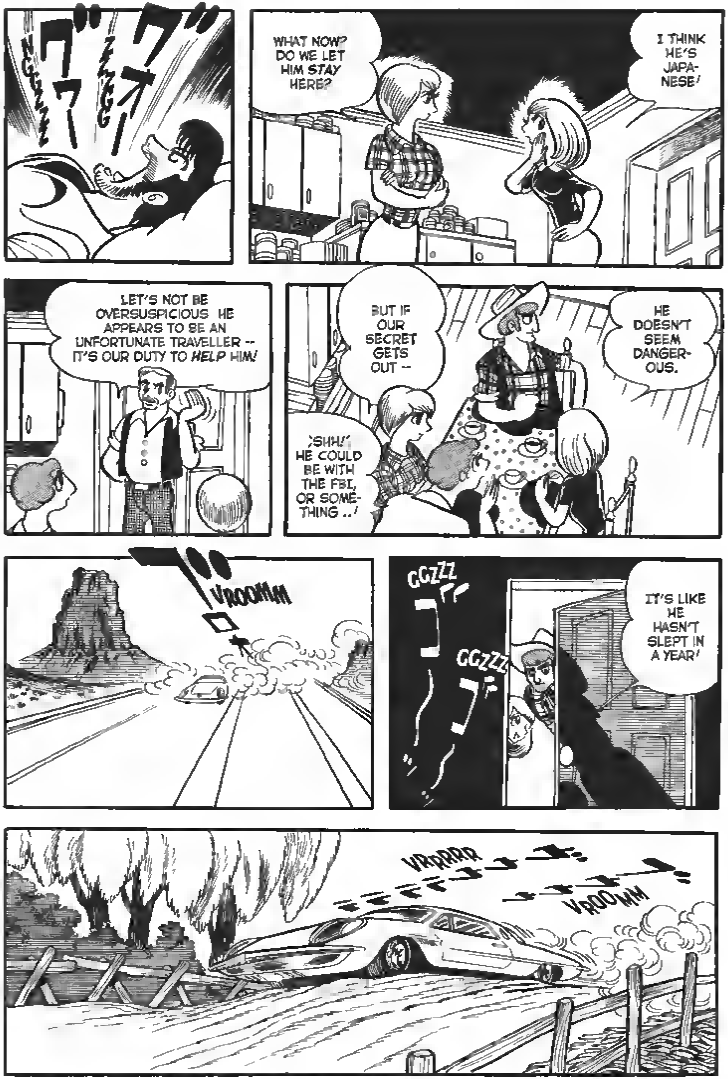

CHARLIE! ANNE!
DINNER!
COMING, MAMA!

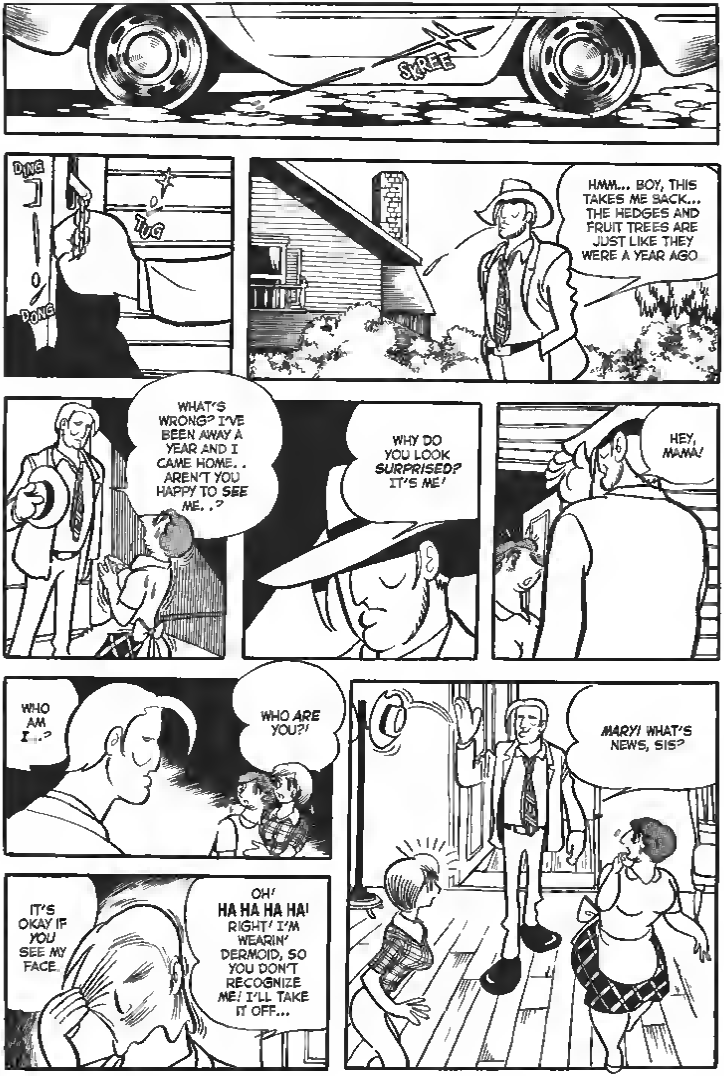
MM-HM.
DEAR, CAN'T YOU AT LEAST STOP READING THE PAPER DURING DINNER?

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR BLESSINGS...

I EVEN HEARD GUNSHOTS THE LAST TIME I WENT INTO TOWN TO GO SHOP PING!
THE CITIES ARE GETTING WORSE ALL THE TIME, AREN'T THEY?
AND ANOTHER EIGHT HUNDRED MURDERS BY PEOPLE WEARING DERMOID HAVE BEEN COMMITTED THIS MONTH!
OH, MY!
IT SAYS HERE FIFTY-FIVE BLACKS DISGUISED AS WHITES HAVE BEEN LYNCHED IN NEW ORLEANS...
LIFE WAS HARD FOR SO LONG...!
THIS YEAR, I FINALLY HAVE TIME TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF AUTUMN'S FALLING LEAVES.
IT'S FALL ALREADY...
IT'S QUIET OUT HERE BEAUTIFUL SUN AND NATURE.. YOU'D NEVER KNOW WE'RE NEAR A NATIONAL HIGHWAY.
WE'RE HAPPY, AREN'T WE? A NICE HOUSE AND SUCH FINE CHILDREN...
MAMA! PAPA! A STRANGER'S COMING!

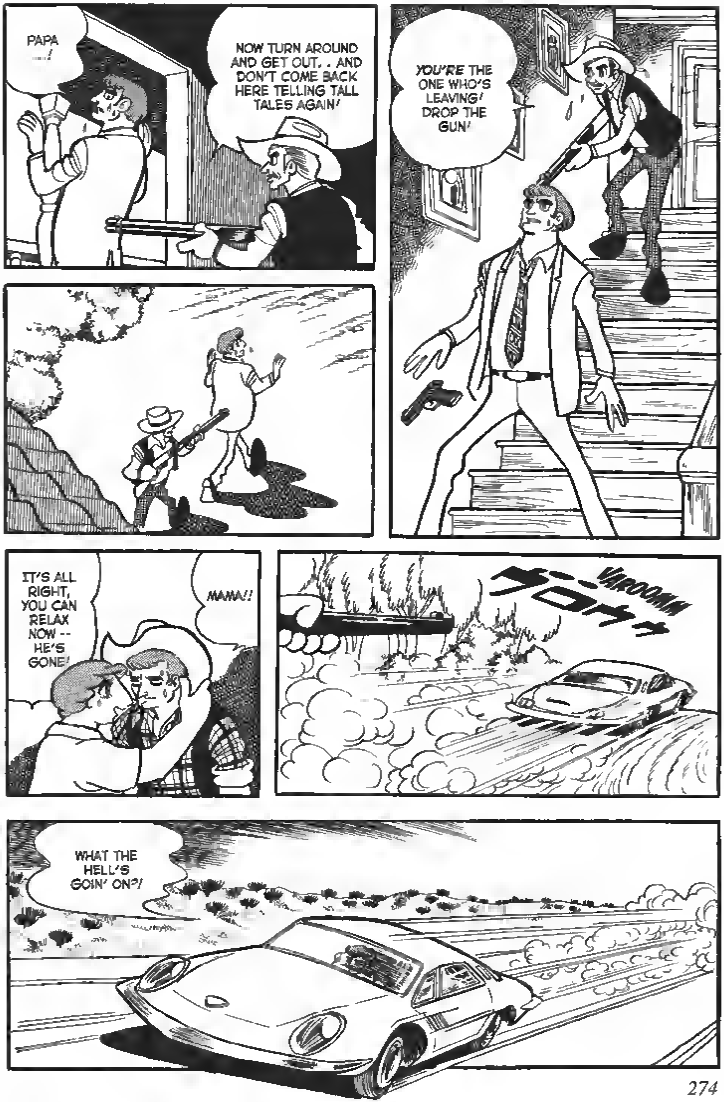
HE'S NOT FROM AROUND HERE LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE. LET'S BRING HIM IN AND GET HIM SOME SOUP!
G... GOHONMATSU SEKI...!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, SIR?
WE HAVE BRANDY, RIGHT? IT'S IN THE CUPBOARD
IS HE AN ALCOHOLIC?
N.. NO SOUP... NEED B... BOOZE.
ゴーッ
ゴーッ
ゴーッ
JURRP-
GULP
GULP


ワ"オー
ZZZGG
NGZZZZ
WHAT NOW? DO WE LET HIM *STAY* HERE?
I THINK HE'S JAPANESE!
LET'S NOT BE OVERSUSPICIOUS HE APPEARS TO BE AN UNFORTUNATE TRAVELLER -- IT'S OUR DUTY TO *HELP* HIM!
BUT IF OUR SECRET GETS OUT --
HE DOESN'T SEEM DANGEROUS.
;SHH!/ HE COULD BE WITH THE FBI, OR SOMETHING../
VROOMM
CGZZZ
GGZZZ
IT'S LIKE HE HASN'T SLEPT IN A YEAR!
VRRRR
VROOMM

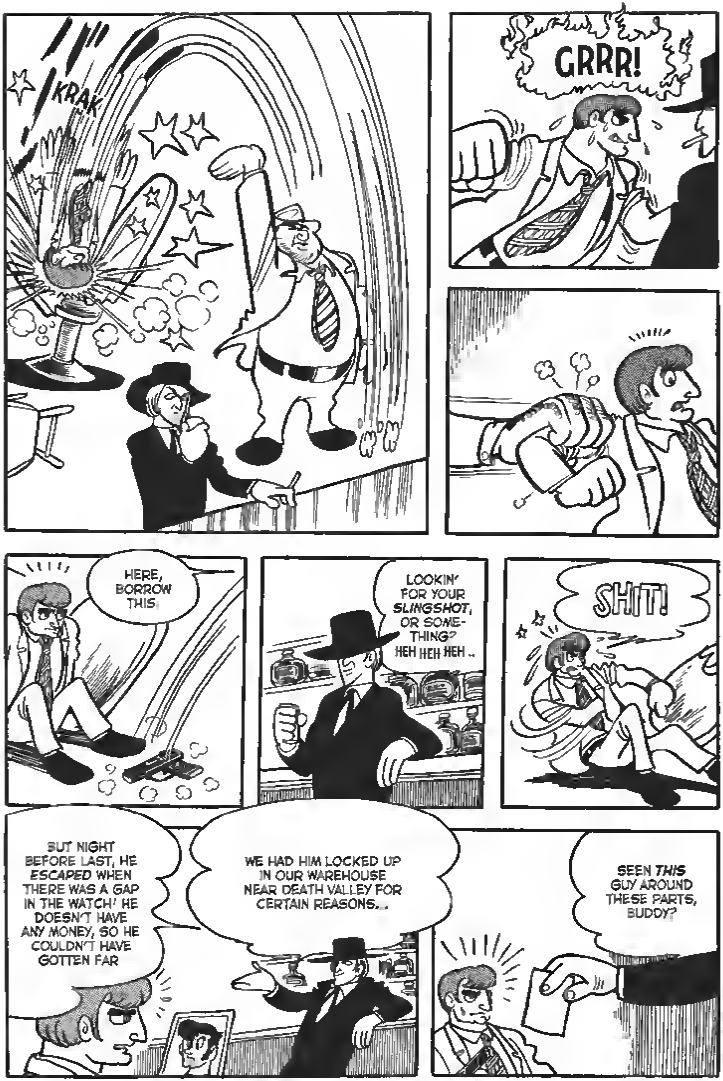

SCREE
DING
TOG
DONG
HMM... BOY, THIS TAKES ME BACK... THE HEDGES AND FRUIT TREES ARE JUST LIKE THEY WERE A YEAR AGO
WHAT'S WRONG? I'VE BEEN AWAY A YEAR AND I CAME HOME.. AREN'T YOU HAPPY TO SEE ME..?
WHY DO YOU LOOK SURPRISED? IT'S ME!
HEY, MAMA!
WHO AM I..?
WHO ARE YOU?!
MARY! WHAT'S NEWS, SIS?
IT'S OKAY IF YOU SEE MY FACE.
OH! HA HA HA HA! RIGHT! I'M WEARIN' DERMOID, SO YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME! I'LL TAKE IT OFF...

DID YOU FORGET YOUR OWN SON'S FACE?
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU PLAYIN' DUMB, MAMA?
YOU ARE NOT MY SON CHARLIE!
GET OUT!
LOOK, IT'S ME, CHARLIE!
WHAT IS IT, MAMA?
CHARLIE !!
MY SON CHARLIE IS ALREADY HERE!
I'M THE REAL CHARLIE!
MAMA, THIS IS SOMEBODY ELSE WEARIN' A DERMOID MASK OF ME!
OH... I SEE...! WHY, YOU LOUSY SON-OF-A-BITCH!!
I'LL GIVE YA TEN BUCKS! GO TO MY HOME, TAKE MY PLACE, AND PRETEND TO BE ME!
SO I HAD A DERMOID MASK MADE OF ME AND FOUND THIS DRIFTER HERE TO WEAR IT!
MAMA, EVERYONE... FORGIVE ME FOR NOT EXPLAINING BEFORE, BUT THE TRUTH IS, I DECIDED TO LEAVE HOME A YEAR AGO...

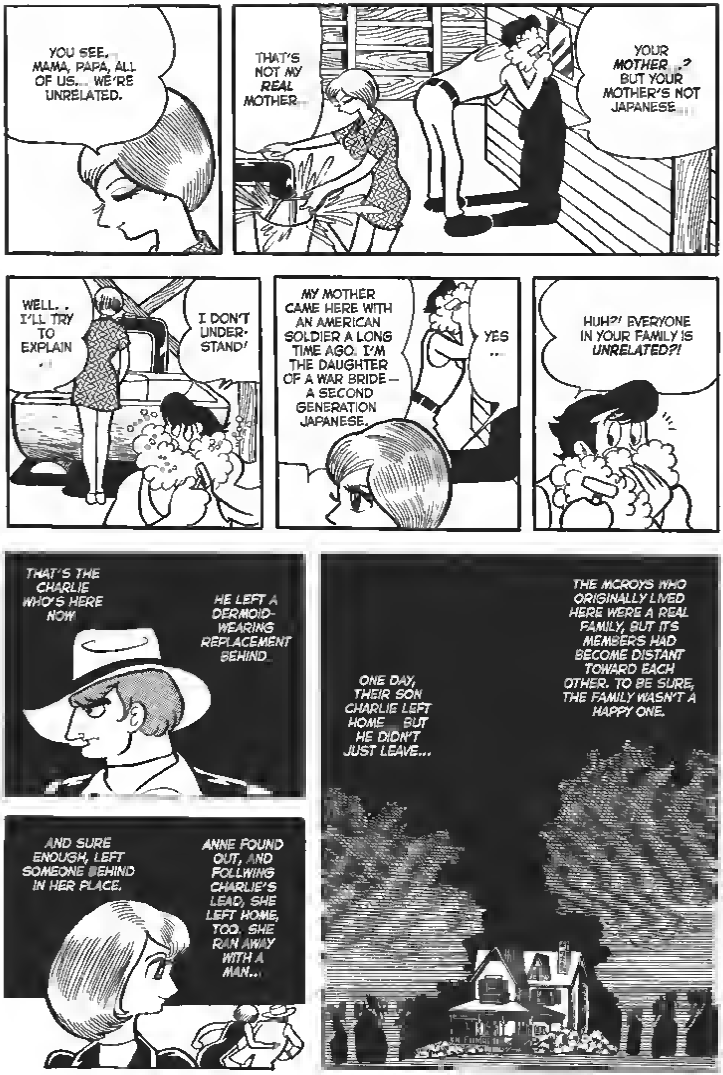
UNDERSTAND NOW, MAMA? THAT'S A BLACK GUY UNDER THERE! I'M SORRY FOR TRICKIN' YA LIKE THAT, BUT I NEVER MEANT TO BE GONE FOR SO LONG, SEE?
AN' DON'T LET NO ONE FIND OUT 'TILL I GET BACK!
WHOA, MARY! DON'T BE A FOOL!
HE'S THE *REAL* CHARLIE! *YOU'RE* THE IMPOSTER!
...
...
ALL RIGHT, YOU! TAKE THAT OFF AND GET THE HELL *OUTTA* HERE!
IT'S YOU... *YOU'RE* WEARING DERMOID, AREN'T YOU?!
IT'S *NOT* DERMOID! HE'S GOT NORMAL, HUMAN SKIN!
ALL RIGHT! TAKE OFF HIS SKIN AND SEE FOR *YOURSELF!*
C'MON! *LEAVE*, OR DO YOU WANNA FIND A WORLD O' HURT?
WHAT A PAIN-IN-THE-BUTT! THIS IS *MY* HOUSE! WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME COMIN' HERE?
GET OUT! AND DON'T EVER COME HERE *AGAIN!*


PAPA ...!
NOW TURN AROUND AND GET OUT, . AND DON'T COME BACK HERE TELLING TALL TALES AGAIN!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S LEAVING! DROP THE GUN!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, YOU CAN RELAX NOW -- HE'S GONE!
MAMA!!
VAROOOMM
WHAT THE HELL'S GOIN' ON?!

MY OWN PARENTS THROWIN' ME OUT!
DRIVE INN
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME REASON!
I NEED A DRINK, OR I'LL GO CRAZY!
MAMA AND PAPA, . AND MARY AND ANNE, . WHAT IF THEY'RE ALL IMPOSTERS . .?
WAIT.. ! COULD IT BE ..?
WHY DID THEY ALL PROTECT HIM WHEN THEY KNOW HE'S AN IMPOSTER...?
WHAT?!
WAS I RUDE? EITHER WAY, THERE'S A STENCH COMIN' OFF YOU SOMETHING AWFUL!
YOU STINK, PAL! MOVE DOWN SOME!

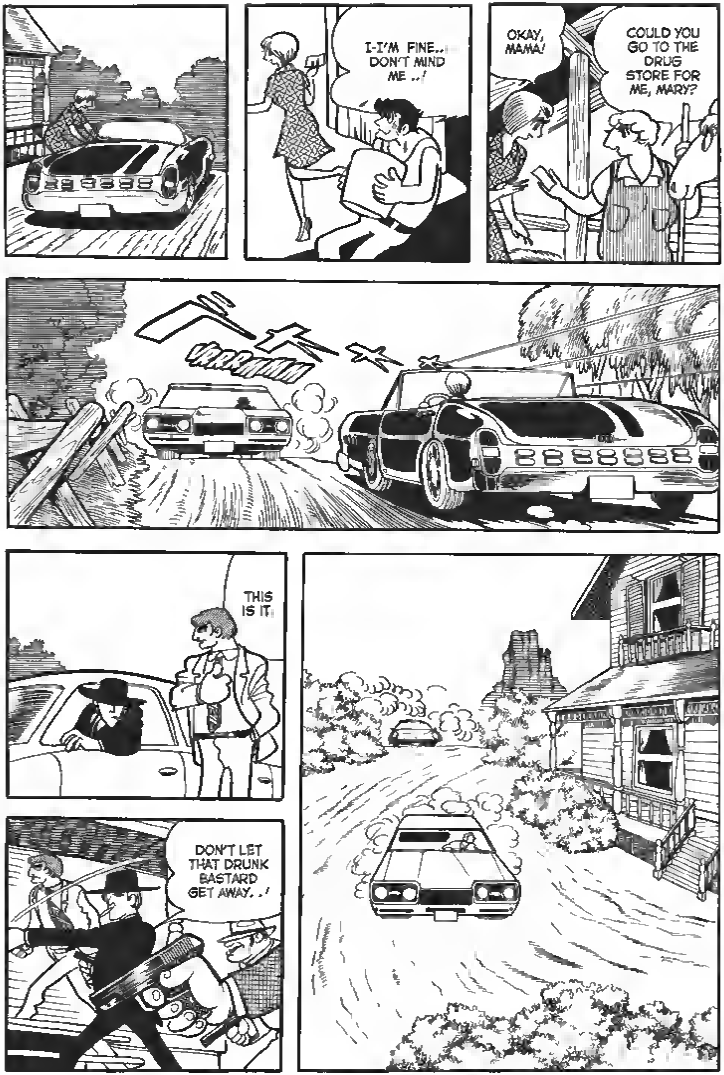

KRAK
GRRR!
HERE, BORROW THIS.
LOOKIN' FOR YOUR SLINGSHOT, OR SOME-THING? HEH HEH HEH..
SHIT!
BUT NIGHT BEFORE LAST, HE ESCAPED WHEN THERE WAS A GAP IN THE WATCH! HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY, SO HE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR
WE HAD HIM LOCKED UP IN OUR WAREHOUSE NEAR DEATH VALLEY FOR CERTAIN REASONS...
SEEN THIS GUY AROUND THESE PARTS, BUDDY?

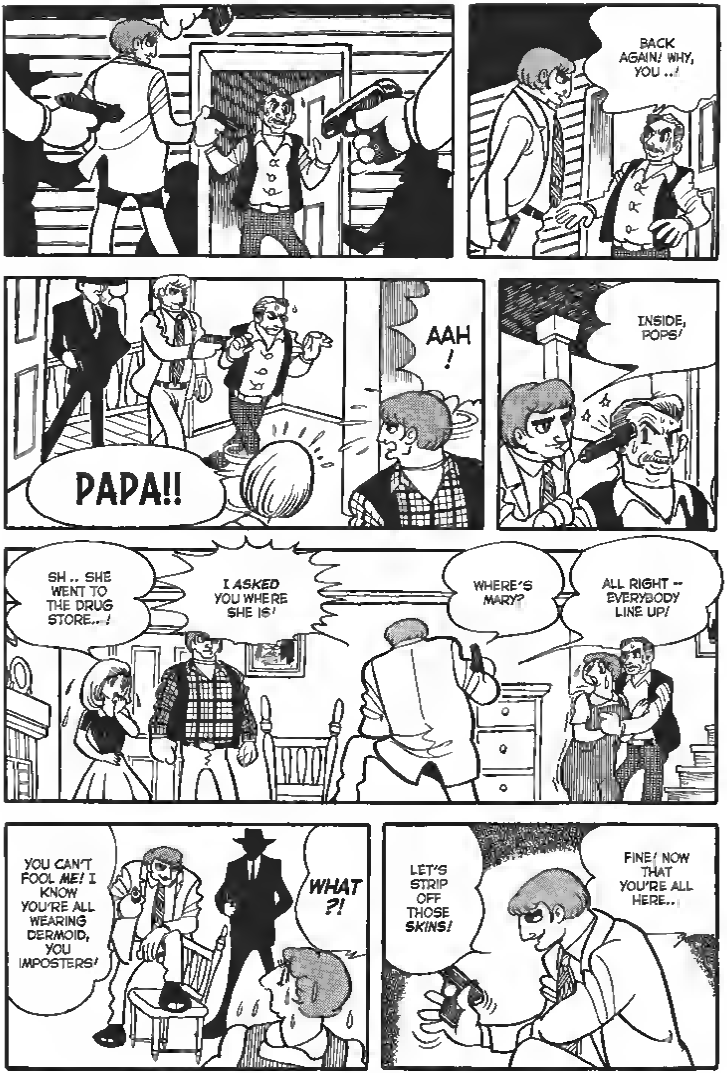
THAT'S IT!
HE LOOKS FAMILIAR...
I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE!
HE'S JAPANESE, AND AN ALCOHOLIC ANY IDEAS...?
SURE... IF YOU DO SOMETHIN' FOR *ME*...!
SHOW US THERE, ALL RIGHT? WE WON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE... WE JUST WANT TO CATCH THE GUY!
AT YOUR HOUSE?!
HE WAS AT MY *HOUSE*... LYING IN BED ASLEEP! IT'S HIM – NO MISTAKE!
JAPAN...
I'VE.. GOTTA GET BACK TO JAPAN SOME HOW...!
OH, .. NEVER MIND THAT!
I OWE YOU PEOPLE MY LIFE, BUT I'VE GOT NOTHING TO REPAY YOU WITH.
THAT'S WHERE MY MOTHER -- REST HER SOUL -- WAS FROM.


YOU SEE, MAMA, PAPA, ALL OF US... WE'RE UNRELATED.
THAT'S NOT MY REAL MOTHER...
YOUR MOTHER...? BUT YOUR MOTHER'S NOT JAPANESE...
WELL... I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
MY MOTHER CAME HERE WITH AN AMERICAN SOLDIER A LONG TIME AGO. I'M THE DAUGHTER OF A WAR BRIDE— A SECOND GENERATION JAPANESE.
YES...
HUH?! EVERYONE IN YOUR FAMILY IS UNRELATED?!
THAT'S THE CHARLIE WHO'S HERE NOW!
HE LEFT A DERMOID-WEARING REPLACEMENT BEHIND.
AND SURE ENOUGH, LEFT SOMEONE BEHIND IN HER PLACE.
ANNE FOUND OUT, AND FOLLWING CHARLIE'S LEAD, SHE LEFT HOME, TOO. SHE RAN AWAY WITH A MAN...
ONE DAY, THEIR SON CHARLIE LEFT HOME... BUT HE DIDN'T JUST LEAVE...
THE MCROYS WHO ORIGINALLY LIVED HERE WERE A REAL FAMILY, BUT ITS MEMBERS HAD BECOME DISTANT TOWARD EACH OTHER. TO BE SURE, THE FAMILY WASN'T A HAPPY ONE.

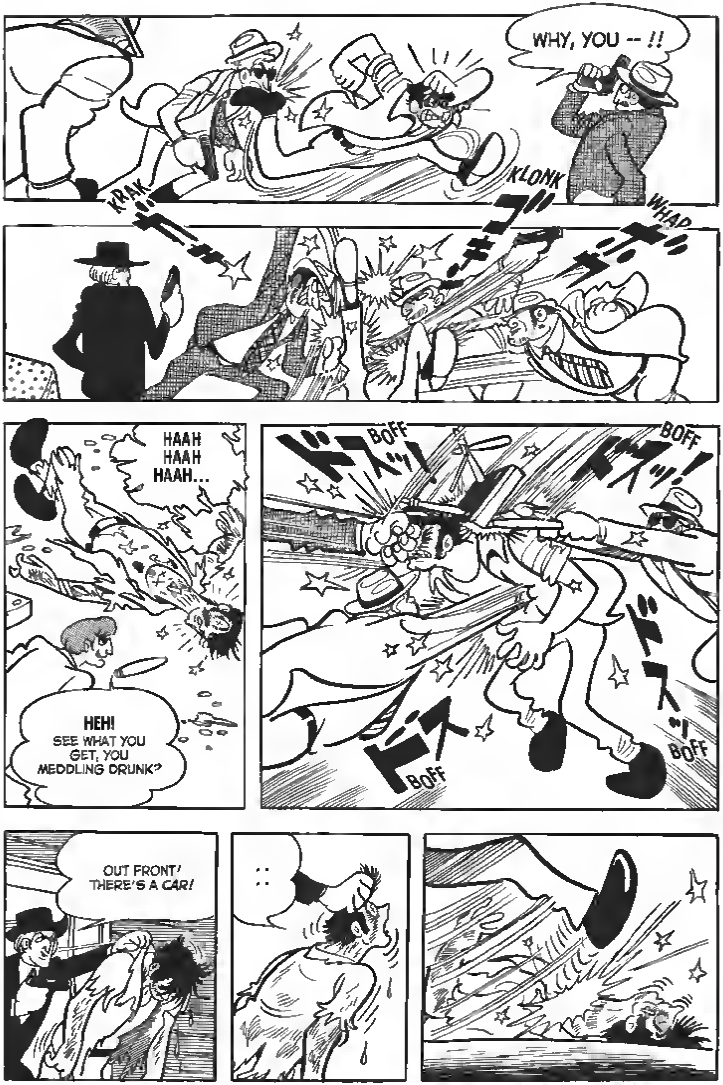
WHEN MARY ASKED ME TO TAKE HER PLACE, IT GAVE ME A HOME.
MY LIFE WAS *DIFFICULT*, AND I'D BEEN THINKING OF TAKING SOME MENIAL WORK. .
MY...
AND LEFT A MARY -- ME, IN OTHER WORDS - IN *HER* PLACE.
THEN, THE REAL MARY WANDERED OFF...
BECOME SOME-ONE *ELSE* WITH DER-MOID.
MARRIAGE IS HARD THESE DAYS, SINCE YOU CAN. .
WHEN MAMA AND PAPA FOUND OUT THEIR CHILDREN WERE ALL IMPOSTERS, THEY BOTH BEGAN GOING OUT AND HAVING AFFAIRS.
HMM...
HMM...
*SO IT'S TURNED OUT THAT ALL FIVE PEOPLE IN OUR HOME ARE REPLACEMENTS...*
*FINALLY, MAMA AND PAPA LEFT THEIR OWN REPLACEMENTS AND NEVER RETURNED.*
*AND WHILE WE ALL KNOW THE OTHERS ARE IMPOSTERS...*

NO, AND WE DON'T *WANT* TO KNOW! NONE OF US WOULD EVER ASK SUCH A THING.
DO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER'S REAL IDENTITIES?
*WE LIVE WITH MORE AFFECTION FOR ONE ANOTHER THAN MOST FAMILIES DO.*
ALL FIVE OF US HAD UNHAPPY LIVES. . BUT HERE, IN THIS HOUSE, WE'VE COME TO FIND THE HAPPINESS WE'VE ALWAYS WANTED! IT'S ALL THANKS TO DERMOID
BUT I DO KNOW THIS!
BUT THEY SAY THE FBI IS LOOKING FOR *ANYONE* WHO USES DERMOID.
WE HAVE ALL WE NEED HERE...
AMERICA IS A SICK COUNTRY... I WONDER IF *ALL* CIVILIZATIONS TURN OUT LIKE THAT AS THEY PROGRESS?
I SEE...
N-N-NO! I'LL J-JUST DRINK *WATER!*
WHEN HE WOKE UP, HE SAID HE NEEDED A DRINK!
DO WE HAVE ANY LIQUOR, MAMA?
AY! UP SO EARLY?

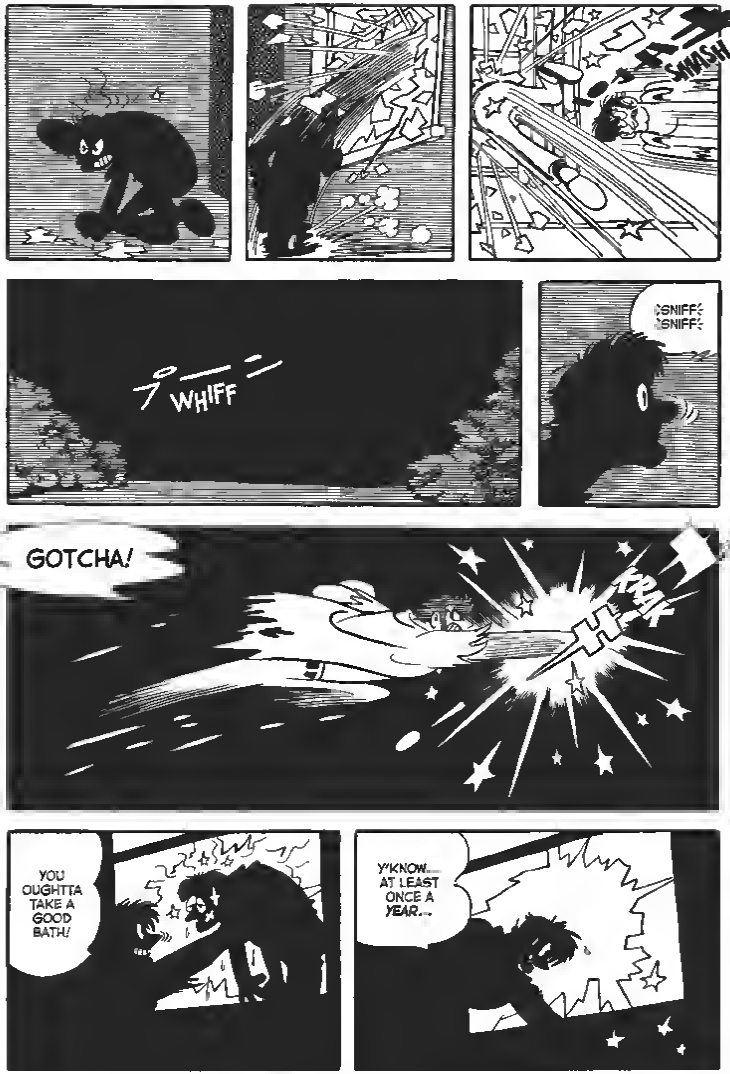

I-I'M FINE... DON'T MIND ME ..!
OKAY, MAMA!
COULD YOU GO TO THE DRUG STORE FOR ME, MARY?
CRASHHH
THIS IS IT.
DON'T LET THAT DRUNK BASTARD GET AWAY..!

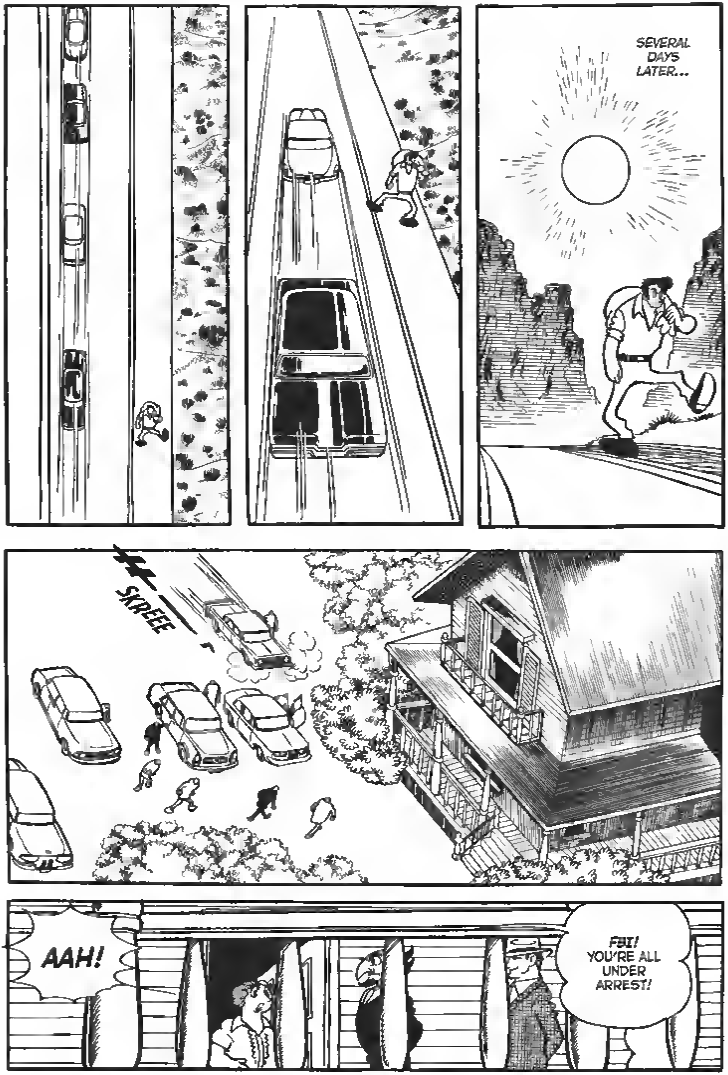

BACK AGAIN! WHY, YOU ..!
AAH !
PAPA!!
INSIDE, POPS!
SH .. SHE WENT TO THE DRUG STORE..!
I ASKED YOU WHERE SHE IS!
WHERE'S MARY?
ALL RIGHT -- EVERYBODY LINE UP!
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! I KNOW YOU'RE ALL WEARING DERMOID, YOU IMPOSTERS!
WHAT ?!
LET'S STRIP OFF THOSE SKINS!
FINE! NOW THAT YOU'RE ALL HERE..

A-HA! THERE YOU ARE, YOU SHIFTY BOOZE-HOUND!
FIRST THING WE'RE DOIN' IS FINDING THAT DRUNK!
STOP!!
SO I CAN SEE THE REAL YOU!
LET'S TAKE THAT OFF...
OH-HO! THIS ONE'S A REAL TOUGH GUY!
I'M NOT JUST GONNA SIT QUIET AND LET YOU PEEL OFF THEIR FACES!
ゴキ!
KLONK
SHUT UP!

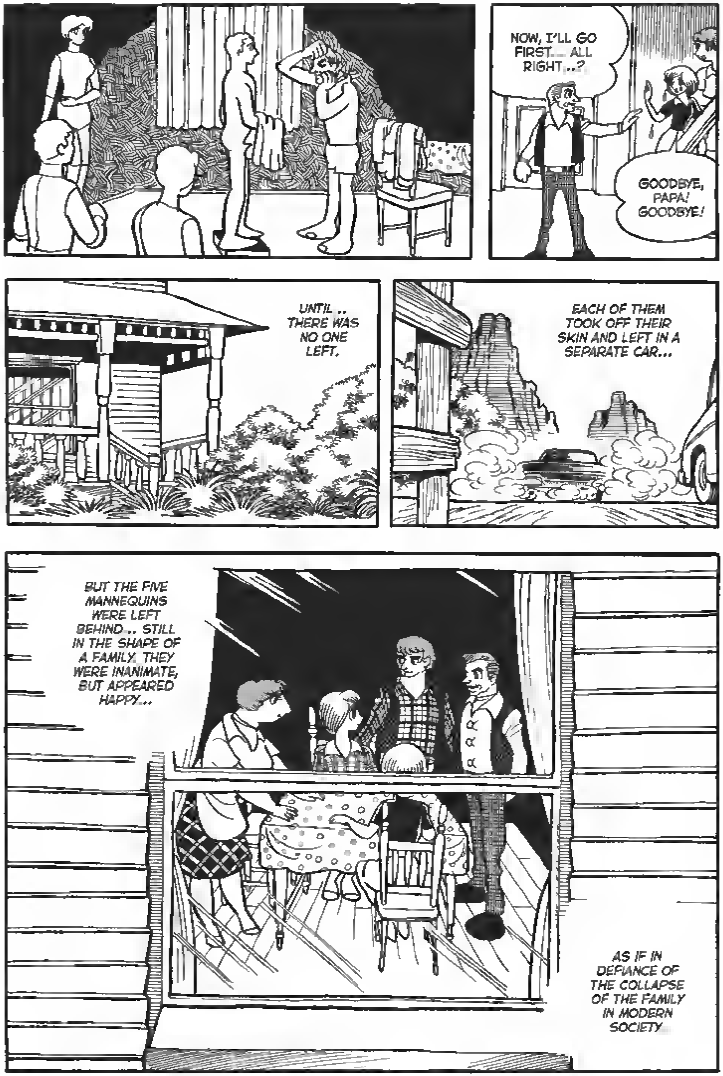

WHY, YOU -- !!
KRAK
KLONK
WHAP
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH...
HEH!
SEE WHAT YOU GET, YOU MEDDLING DRUNK?
BOFF
BOFF
BOFF
BOFF
OUT FRONT! THERE'S A CAR!

CLUB! CLUB! CLUB! CLUB!
SHWFF
GASP
HUH?
YOU USED-UP, LOW DOWN SONS-OF-BITCHES! NOW YOU *REALLY* GOT MY HAIR ON END! I'M GONNA GIVE YOU A FULL-ON *CLOBBERING!*
KLONK
HAI-YA!
GRR!


SMASH
WHIFF
:SNIFF:
:SNIFF:
GOTCHA!
KRAK
YOU OUGHTTA TAKE A GOOD BATH!
Y'KNOW... AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR...

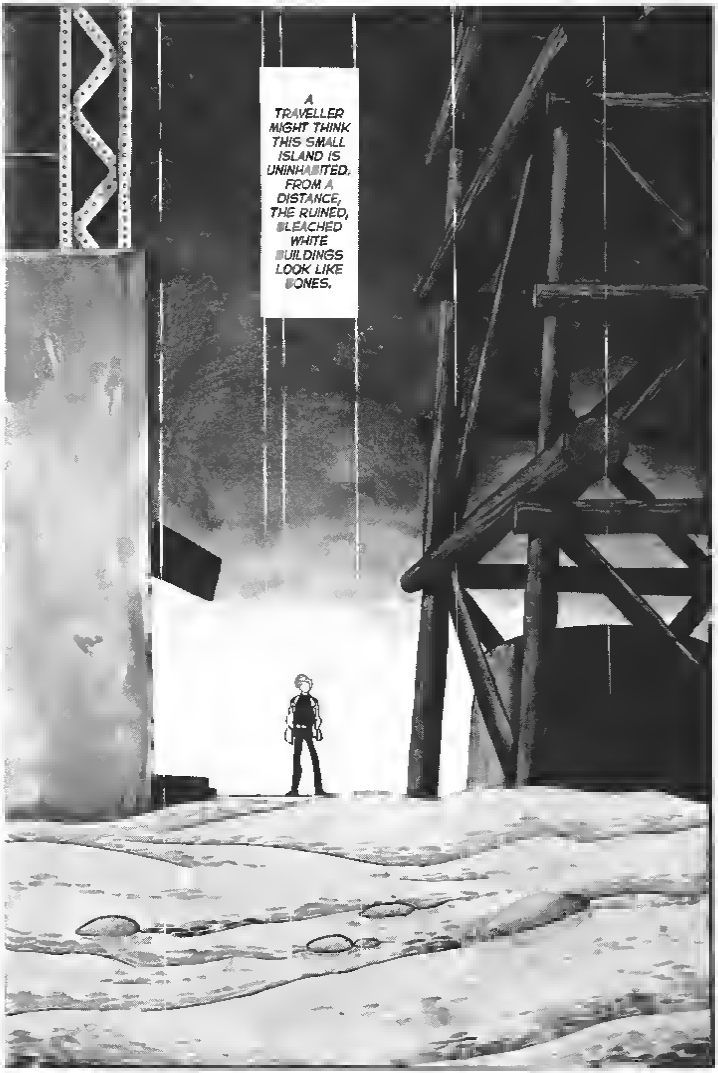

SEVERAL DAYS LATER...
SKREEE
AAH!
FBI! YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST!

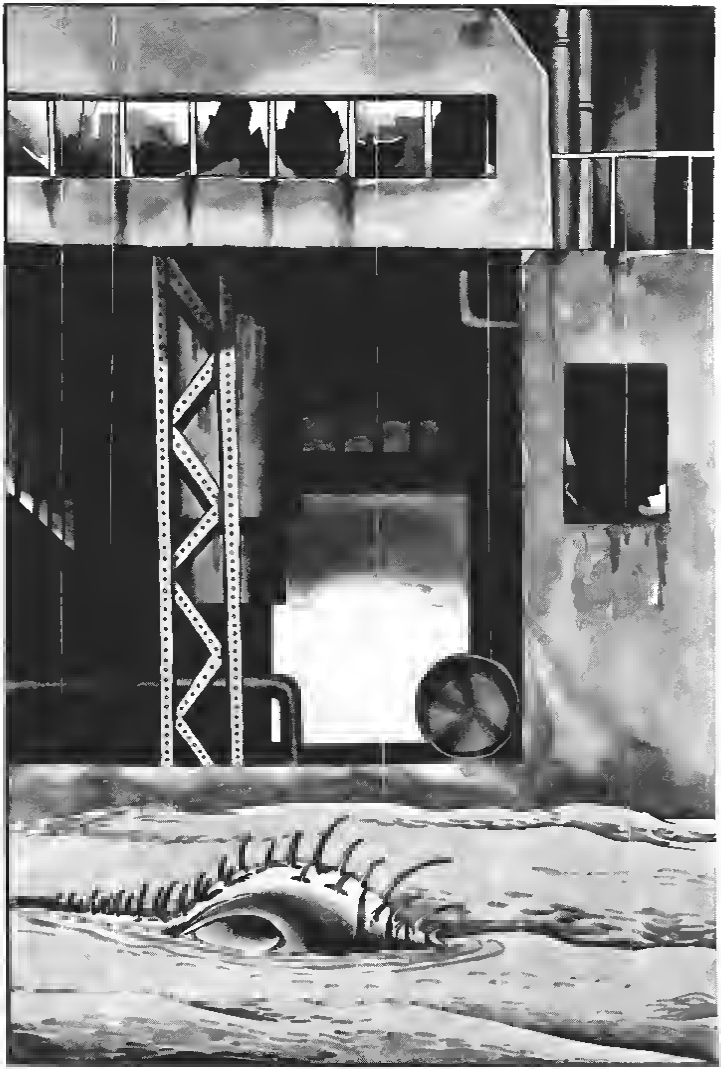
WE ARE,... THE WHOLE FAMILY
PLEASE... BEFORE YOU TAKE US AWAY, CAN I *TALK* TO MY FAMILY ALONE...?
*EVERY* ONE OF YOU!
YOU'RE ALL WEARING DERMOID, AREN'T YOU?
THEY'RE HERE AT LAST...!
PAPA...!
WE'LL.... PROBABLY NEVER *SEE* EACH OTHER AGAIN...!
WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE OFF THESE SKINS NOW AND BECOME WHO WE USED TO BE
LISTEN, EVERYONE... OUR LAST DAY TOGETHER HAS COME...
I DON'T WANT TO *SPOIL* OUR MEMORIES OF ONE ANOTHER I BOUGHT FIVE MANNEQUINS IN CASE OF THIS VERY DAY..
NOW I WANT YOU ALL TO *PROMISE*,.. UP TO NOW, NONE OF US HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER'S TRUE IDENTITIES..
BOY, IT SURE *HAS* BEEN NICE..!
IT'S BEEN NICE, HASN'T IT, PAPA?
GOOD-BYE.... ALL OF YOU...!
GOODBYE, MY DEAR... MY CHILDREN!
OKAY, PAPA!
ONE BY ONE, WE'LL EACH TAKE OFF OUR SKIN, PLACE IT ON A MANNEQUIN, AND LEAVE SEPARATELY. THAT WAY, THIS WILL ALL END WITHOUT SEEING EACH OTHER'S FACES

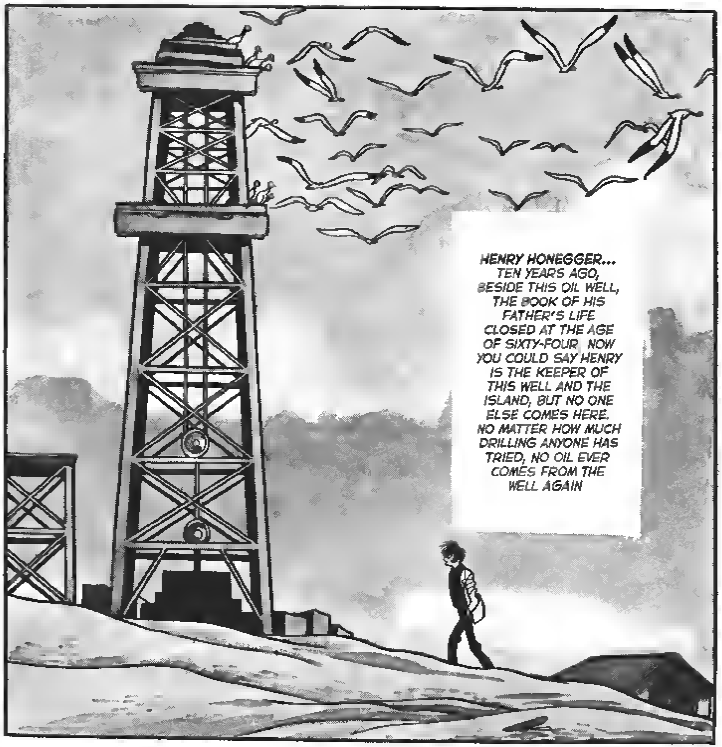

NOW, I'LL GO FIRST... ALL RIGHT...?
GOODBYE, PAPA! GOODBYE!
UNTIL ... THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT.
EACH OF THEM TOOK OFF THEIR SKIN AND LEFT IN A SEPARATE CAR...
BUT THE FIVE MANNEQUINS WERE LEFT BEHIND ... STILL IN THE SHAPE OF A FAMILY. THEY WERE INANIMATE, BUT APPEARED HAPPY...
AS IF IN DEFIANCE OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE FAMILY IN MODERN SOCIETY

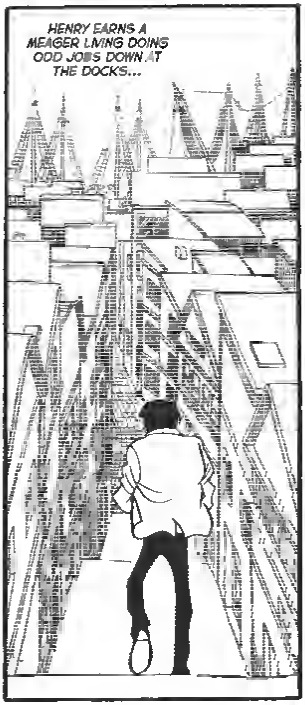
CHAPTER 14

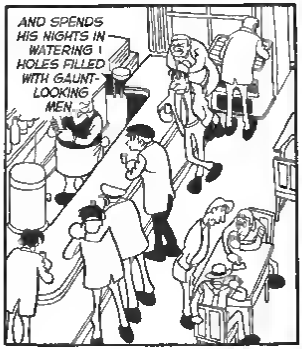
# VALS RHAPSODY


A TRAVELLER MIGHT THINK THIS SMALL ISLAND IS UNINHABITED. FROM A DISTANCE, THE RUINED, BLEACHED WHITE BUILDINGS LOOK LIKE BONES.

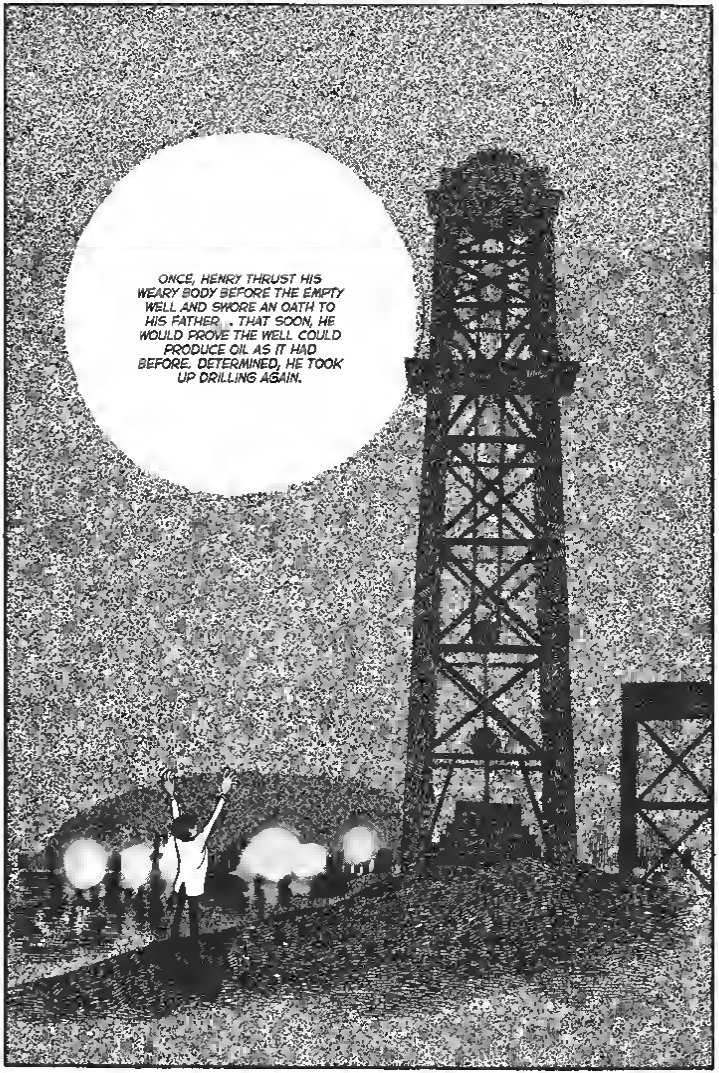


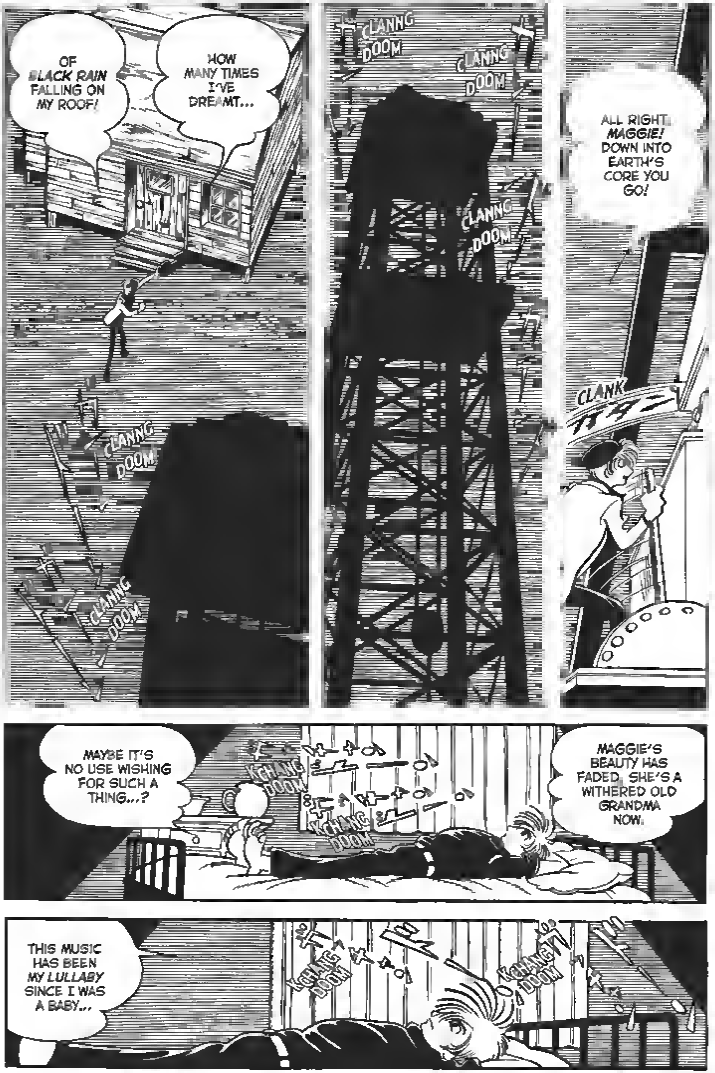

HENRY HONEGGER...
TEN YEARS AGO, BESIDE THIS OIL WELL, THE BOOK OF HIS FATHER'S LIFE CLOSED AT THE AGE OF SIXTY-FOUR. NOW YOU COULD SAY HENRY IS THE KEEPER OF THIS WELL AND THE ISLAND, BUT NO ONE ELSE COMES HERE. NO MATTER HOW MUCH DRILLING ANYONE HAS TRIED, NO OIL EVER COMES FROM THE WELL AGAIN

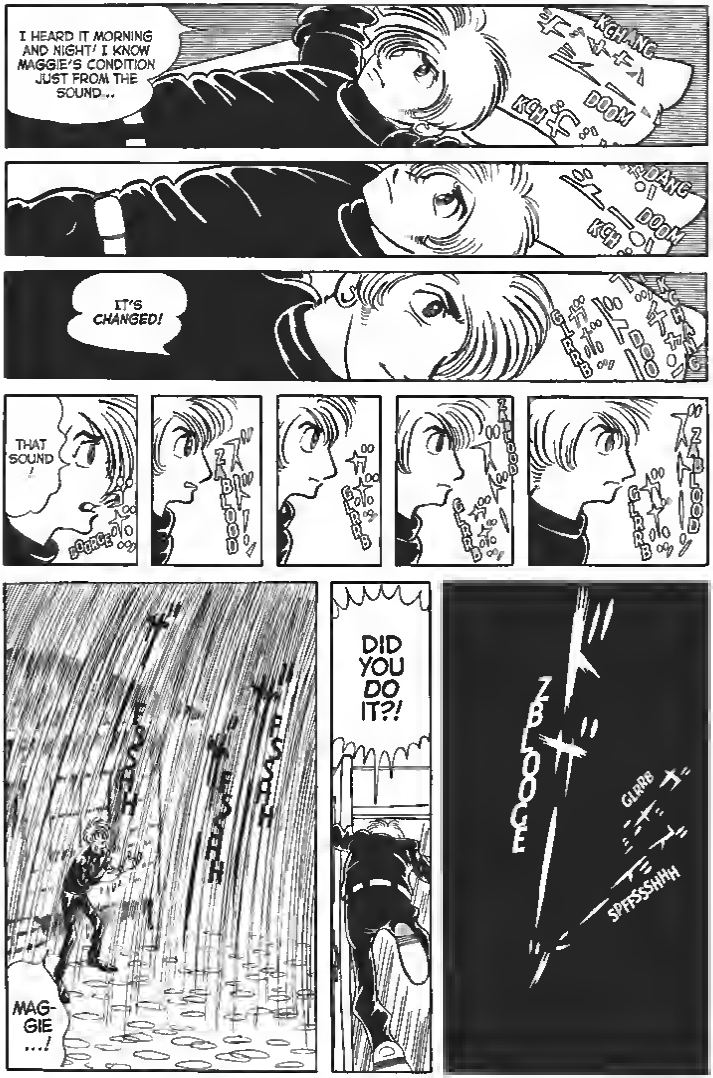

HENRY EARNS A MEAGER LIVING DOING ODD JOBS DOWN AT THE DOCKS...

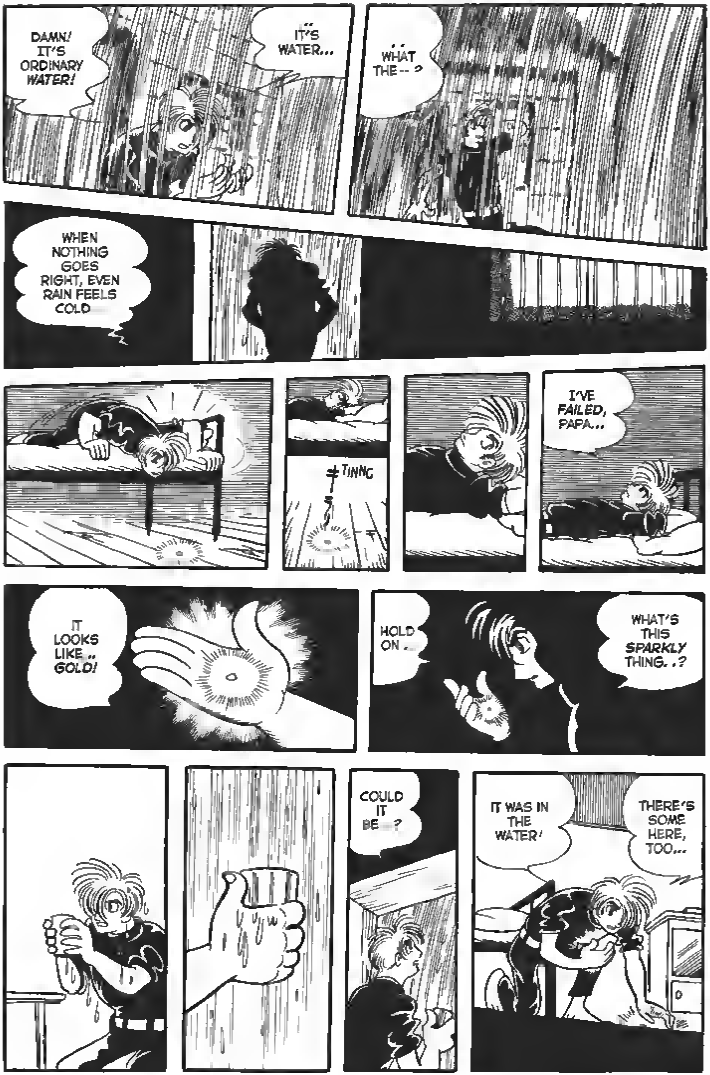

AND SPENDS HIS NIGHTS IN WATERING HOLES FILLED WITH GAUNT-LOOKING MEN.

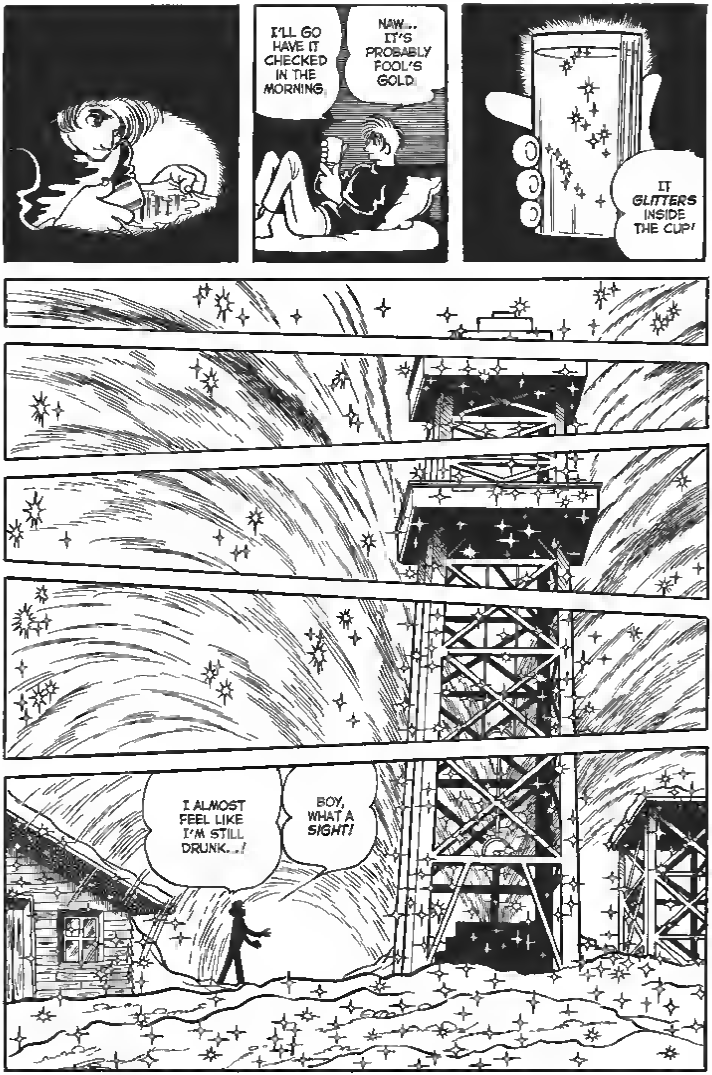
FROM A HILL ON THE ISLAND, HENRY GAZES AT THE HIGHWAY, AT THE LUXURY CARS, AND CURSES ALL THOSE WHO'VE ABANDONED THE WELL.


ONCE, HENRY THRUST HIS WEARY BODY BEFORE THE EMPTY WELL AND SWORE AN OATH TO HIS FATHER . . THAT SOON, HE WOULD PROVE THE WELL COULD PRODUCE OIL AS IT HAD BEFORE. DETERMINED, HE TOOK UP DRILLING AGAIN.

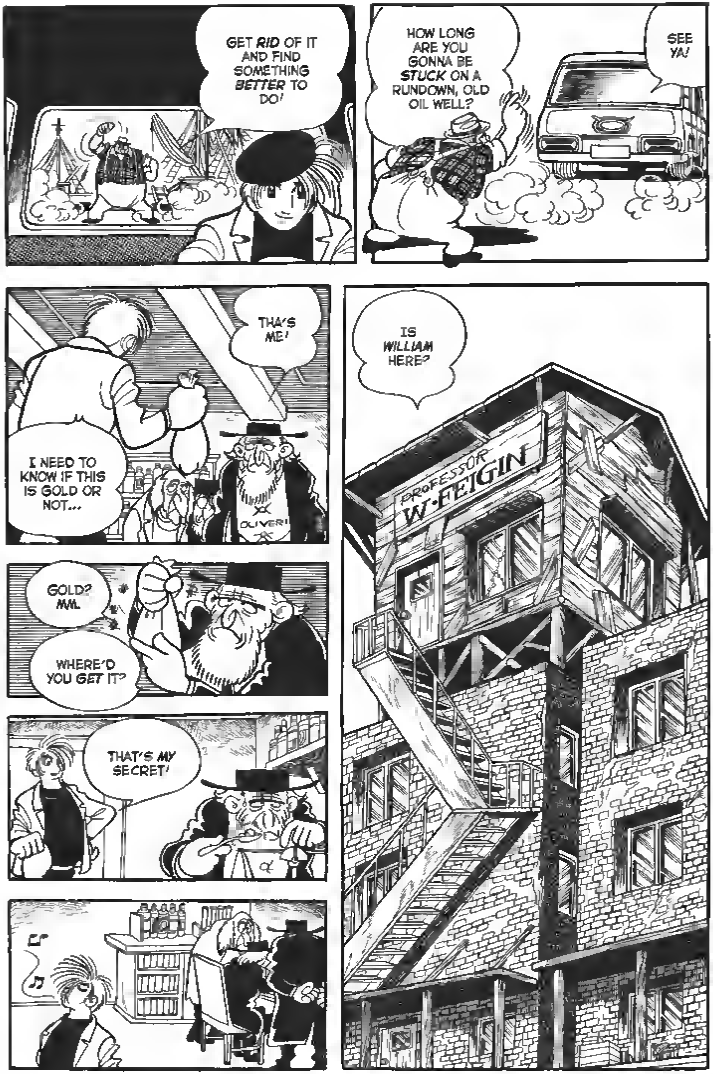

OF BLACK RAIN FALLING ON MY ROOF!
HOW MANY TIMES I'VE DREAMT...
CLANNG DOOM
CLANNG DOOM
CLANNG DOOM
CLANNG DOOM
CLANNG DOOM
CLANNG DOOM
ALL RIGHT, MAGGIE! DOWN INTO EARTH'S CORE YOU GO!
CLANK
MAYBE IT'S NO USE WISHING FOR SUCH A THING...?
KCHANG DOOM
KCHANG DOOM
MAGGIE'S BEAUTY HAS FADED. SHE'S A WITHERED OLD GRANDMA NOW.
THIS MUSIC HAS BEEN MY LULLABY SINCE I WAS A BABY...
KCHANG DOOM
KCHANG DOOM

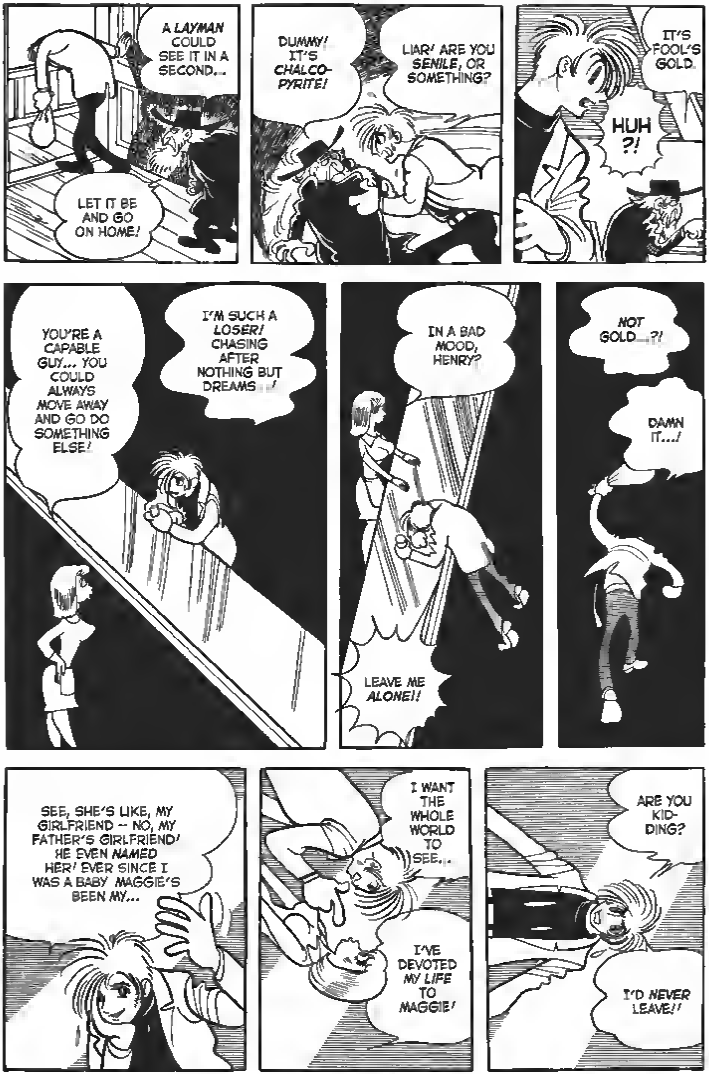

I HEARD IT MORNING AND NIGHT/ I KNOW MAGGIE'S CONDITION JUST FROM THE SOUND...
KCHANG
DOOM
KGH
DANG
DOOM
KGH
IT'S CHANGED!
THAT SOUND!
ZBLOOD
GLRRB
ZBLOOD
GLRRB
ZBLOOD
GLRRB
ZBLOOD
GLRRB
ZBLOOD
GLRRB
DID YOU DO IT?!
MAG-GIE ...!
ZBLOOGE
GLRRB
SPFFSSHHH


DAMN! IT'S ORDINARY WATER!
..IT'S WATER...
..WHAT THE--?
WHEN NOTHING GOES RIGHT, EVEN RAIN FEELS COLD...
TINNG
I'VE FAILED, PAPA...
IT LOOKS LIKE.. GOLD!
HOLD ON..
WHAT'S THIS SPARKLY THING..?
COULD IT BE...?
IT WAS IN THE WATER!
THERE'S SOME HERE, TOO...

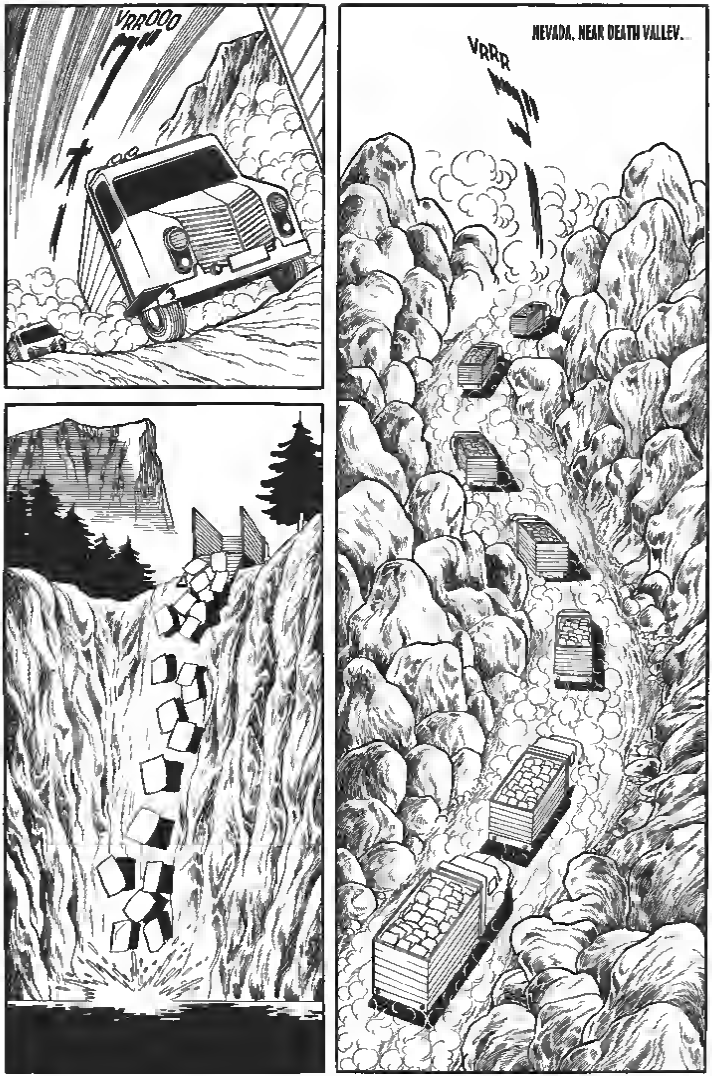

I'LL GO HAVE IT CHECKED IN THE MORNING.
NAW... IT'S PROBABLY FOOL'S GOLD.
IT GLITTERS INSIDE THE CUP!
I ALMOST FEEL LIKE I'M STILL DRUNK...!
BOY, WHAT A SIGHT!

WAIT, MAGGIE! I'M GOING INTO TOWN!
I'M A MILLION-AIRE...! HA HA HA HA
IT'S MY GOLD... ALL OF IT!
NEVER MIND, OLD MAN! DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT MINING?
IDIOT! WHAT DO YOU THINK PUTS FOOD ON YOUR PLATE?
WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?
YOU'RE LATE, HENRY! WE'RE ALREADY DONE UNLOADING!
BUT, . WHAT'S THIS ABOUT ..?
IF IT'S AN EXPERT YOU WANT, WILLIAM'S PRETTY GOOD .. GRADUATED FROM CALIFORNIA STATE, I HEAR.
YOU HAVEN'T FOUND YOURSELF A MINE, HAVE YA?

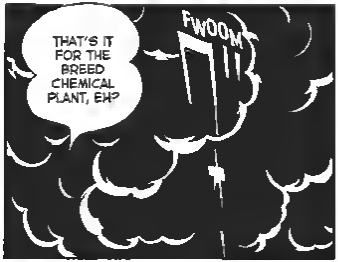

GET RID OF IT AND FIND SOMETHING BETTER TO DO!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA BE STUCK ON A RUNDOWN, OLD OIL WELL?
SEE YA!
THA'S ME!
I NEED TO KNOW IF THIS IS GOLD OR NOT...
OLIVER!
IS WILLIAM HERE?
PROFESSOR W-FEIGIN
GOLD? MM.
WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
THAT'S MY SECRET!

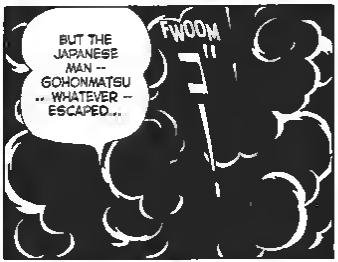

A LAYMAN COULD SEE IT IN A SECOND...
LET IT BE AND GO ON HOME!
DUMMY! IT'S CHALCOPYRITE!
LIAR! ARE YOU SENILE, OR SOMETHING?
IT'S FOOL'S GOLD.
HUH ?!
YOU'RE A CAPABLE GUY... YOU COULD ALWAYS MOVE AWAY AND GO DO SOMETHING ELSE!
I'M SUCH A LOSER! CHASING AFTER NOTHING BUT DREAMS...!
IN A BAD MOOD, HENRY?
LEAVE ME ALONE!!
NOT GOLD...?!
DAMN IT...!
SEE, SHE'S LIKE, MY GIRLFRIEND -- NO, MY FATHER'S GIRLFRIEND! HE EVEN NAMED HER! EVER SINCE I WAS A BABY MAGGIE'S BEEN MY...
I WANT THE WHOLE WORLD TO SEE...
I'VE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO MAGGIE!
ARE YOU KIDDING?
I'D NEVER LEAVE!!

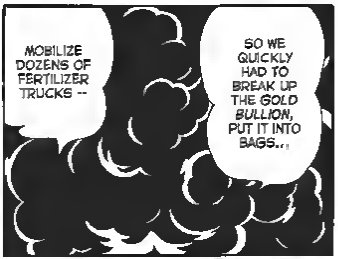
I FINALLY FOUND YA!
Y... YOUNG FELLA..
SOON, THERE WILL BE OIL... I KNOW IT!!
HEAR ME, WORLD...!
MY HOME! YOU WANT ME TO GIVE THAT UP...? NOT A CHANCE!
MAGGIE'S EVERY-THING TO ME!
THERE WERE PEOPLE AROUND, SO I AVOIDED TELLIN' YOU THE TRUTH!
I'M SORRY FOR BEFORE..
F-FOR REAL?!
IT IS GOLD - THE REAL MCCOY!
HE'S A MILLION-AIRE!
I KNEW IT...! YAHOO!
NO WAY!!
HOW ABOUT GIVIN' ME A CUT, HENRY?

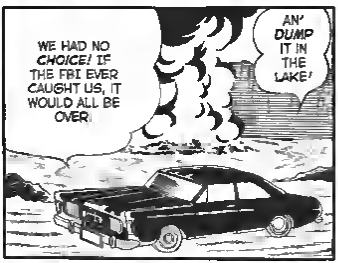

VRROOO
NEVADA. NEAR DEATH VALLEY.
VRRR

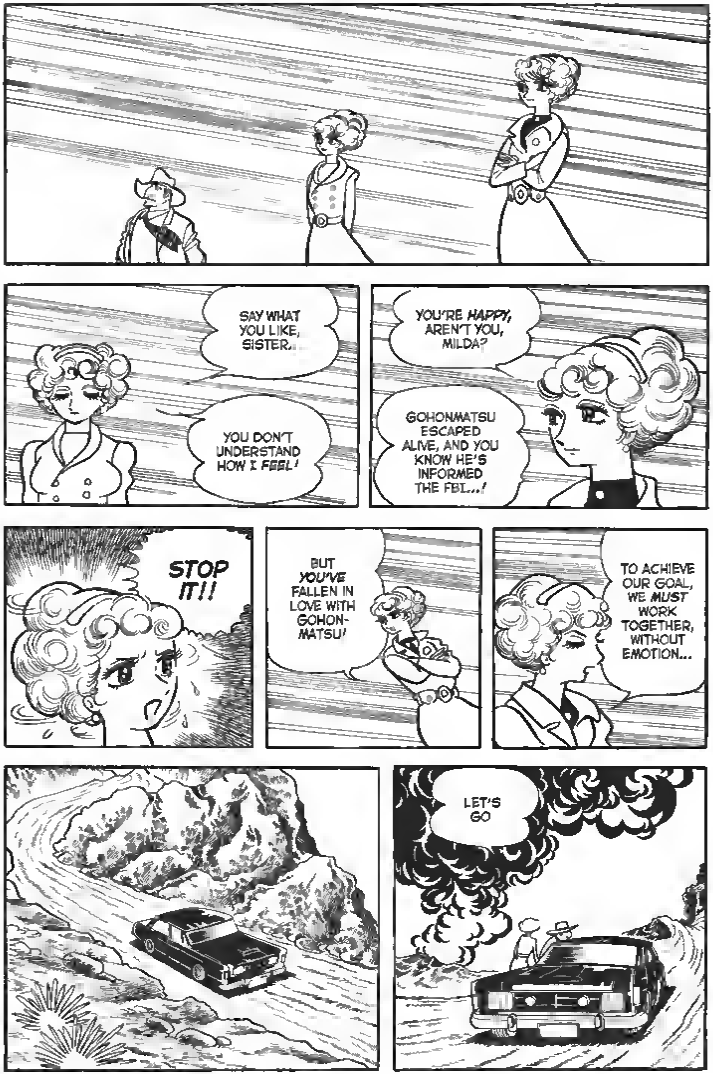
FWOOM
KRAKKRKRR
CA-ARRR

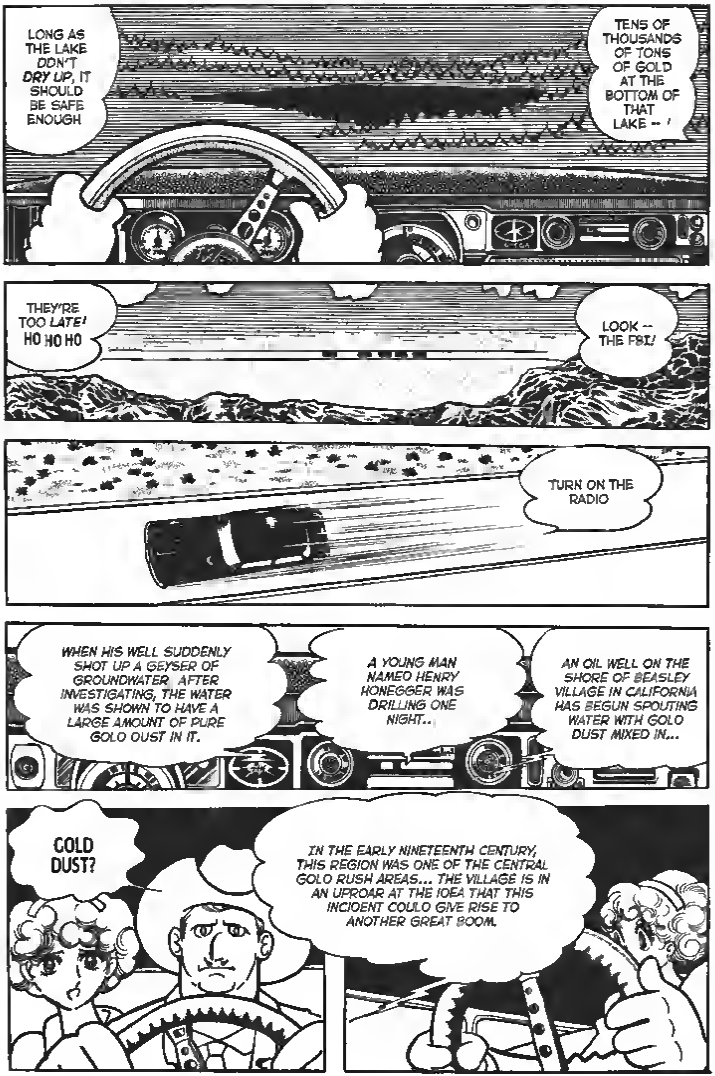

THAT'S IT FOR THE BREED CHEMICAL PLANT, EH?
FWOOM

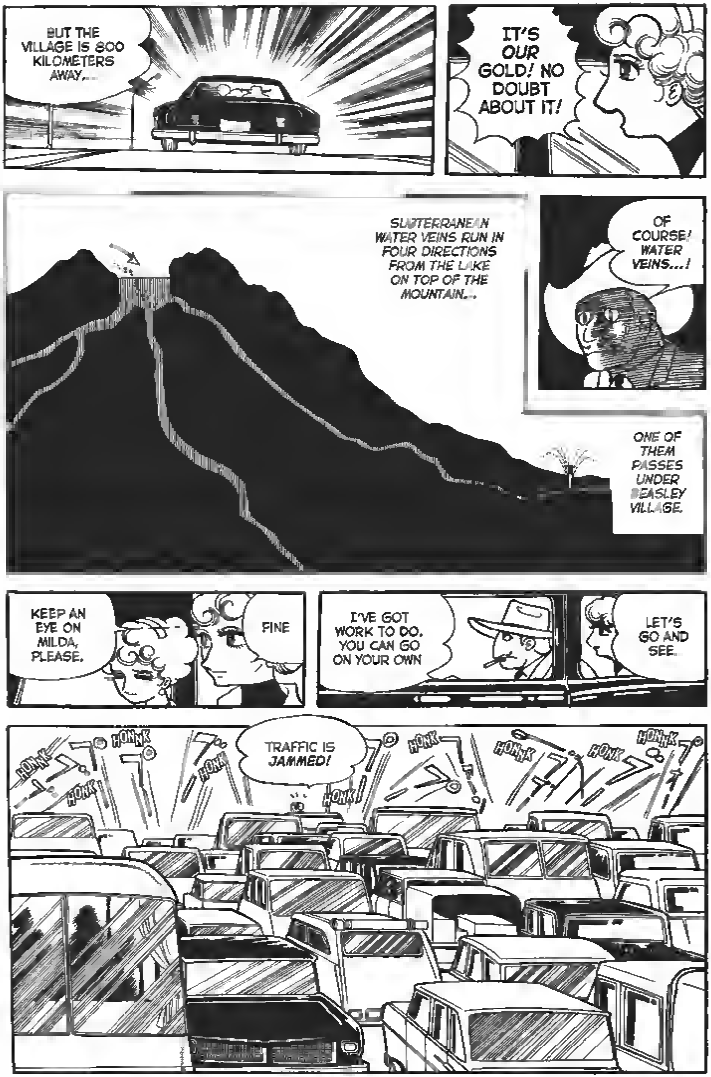

BUT THE JAPANESE MAN -- GOHONMATSU .. WHATEVER -- ESCAPED...
FWOOM

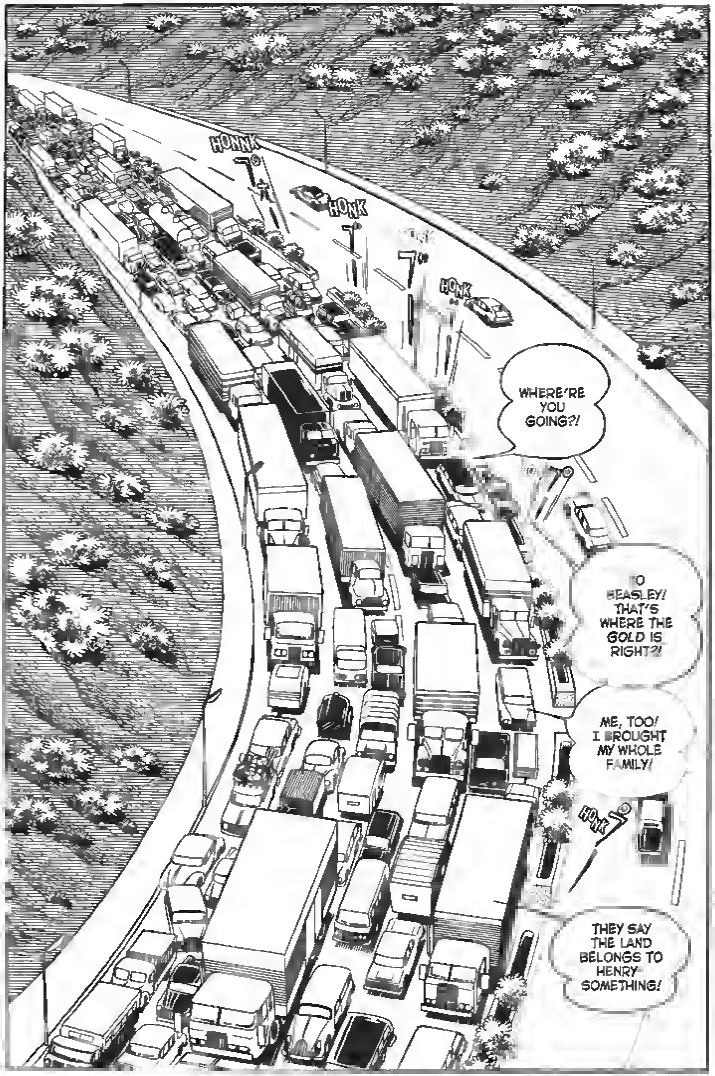

MOBILIZE DOZENS OF FERTILIZER TRUCKS --
SO WE QUICKLY HAD TO BREAK UP THE GOLD *BULLION*, PUT IT INTO BAGS...


WE HAD NO *CHOICE!* IF THE FBI EVER CAUGHT US, IT WOULD ALL BE OVER.
AN' *DUMP* IT IN THE LAKE!


SAY WHAT YOU LIKE, SISTER...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW I *FEEL!*
YOU'RE *HAPPY*, AREN'T YOU, MILDA?
GOHONMATSU ESCAPED ALIVE, AND YOU KNOW HE'S INFORMED THE FBI...!
*STOP IT!!*
BUT *YOU'VE* FALLEN IN LOVE WITH GOHON-MATSU!
TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL, WE *MUST* WORK TOGETHER, WITHOUT EMOTION...
LET'S GO


LONG AS THE LAKE DON'T DRY UP, IT SHOULD BE SAFE ENOUGH
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF TONS OF GOLD AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT LAKE --!
THEY'RE TOO LATE! HO HO HO
LOOK -- THE FBI!
TURN ON THE RADIO
WHEN HIS WELL SUDDENLY SHOT UP A GEYSER OF GROUNDWATER. AFTER INVESTIGATING, THE WATER WAS SHOWN TO HAVE A LARGE AMOUNT OF PURE GOLD DUST IN IT.
A YOUNG MAN NAMED HENRY HONEGGER WAS DRILLING ONE NIGHT..
AN OIL WELL ON THE SHORE OF BEASLEY VILLAGE IN CALIFORNIA HAS BEGUN SPOUTING WATER WITH GOLD DUST MIXED IN...
GOLD DUST?
IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY, THIS REGION WAS ONE OF THE CENTRAL GOLD RUSH AREAS... THE VILLAGE IS IN AN UPROAR AT THE IDEA THAT THIS INCIDENT COULD GIVE RISE TO ANOTHER GREAT BOOM.


BUT THE VILLAGE IS 800 KILOMETERS AWAY...
IT'S OUR GOLD! NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!
SUBTERRANEAN WATER VEINS RUN IN FOUR DIRECTIONS FROM THE LAKE ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN...
OF COURSE! WATER VEINS...!
ONE OF THEM PASSES UNDER BEASLEY VILLAGE.
KEEP AN EYE ON MILDA, PLEASE.
FINE
I'VE GOT WORK TO DO. YOU CAN GO ON YOUR OWN
LET'S GO AND SEE.
HONK
HONK
HONK
HONK
TRAFFIC IS JAMMED!
HONK
HONK
HONK
HONK
HONK


HONK
HONK
HONK
WHERE'RE YOU GOING?!
IO BEASLEY! THAT'S WHERE THE GOLD IS RIGHT?!
ME, TOO! I BROUGHT MY WHOLE FAMILY!
HONK
THEY SAY THE LAND BELONGS TO HENRY SOMETHING!

GET LOST, ALL OF YA! GO HOME! THIS IS MY LAND! IT'S MY CLAIM! NOW GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE!!
I WAS THE ORIGINAL OWNER OF THAT WELL... I EMPLOYED YOUR FATHER!
HENRY...?
I DON'T CARE! NOW, SHUT UP AND GO AWAY!
SELL THE WELL TO ME! I'LL MAKE YOU A COMPANY MANAGER -- NO, VICE-PRESIDENT!
LISTEN, HENRY! VILLAGE AND STATE DEVELOPMENT IS TIED UP IN THIS ... CAN'T WE TALK?

FWIINNG
PHING
GET LOST, YOU RICH PIGS!!
FORGET IT!!
GET BACK! ALL OF YOU!!
KABLAM
KABLAAM
EEK!!
AAH! THE WIND'S CHANGED!
THE WATER...!
GOLLLD !!
AIEEE! GOLD!!
THIS IS MY LAND! IT BELONGS TO ME! WHEN I WAS DOWN AND OUT, YOU PEOPLE DIDN'T CARE AT ALL! DID ANY ONE OF YOU EVER SAY A KIND WORD TO ME?!
NOW THINGS TURN GOOD AND YOU'RE SWARMING AROUND ME LIKE ANTS...! I CAN'T TRUST ANY OF YOU!!

ARE YOU HENRY...?
LISA ZEPHY-RUS.
MY NAME IS ZEPHYRUS...
WHO'RE YOU...?
LISTEN TO ME.. THE GOLD WILL KEEP COMING, FIFTY THOUSAND TONS WORTH OR MORE..!
I DON'T WANT THE GOLD AND I DIDN'T REALLY COME HERE TO TALK TO YOU, EITHER!
NO!!
HENRY, I BEG YOU -- PUT DOWN THE GUN!
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
THIS SOME KINDA TRICK ...?
;HMPH!; YOU WANT MY GOLD TOO, DON'T YOU?

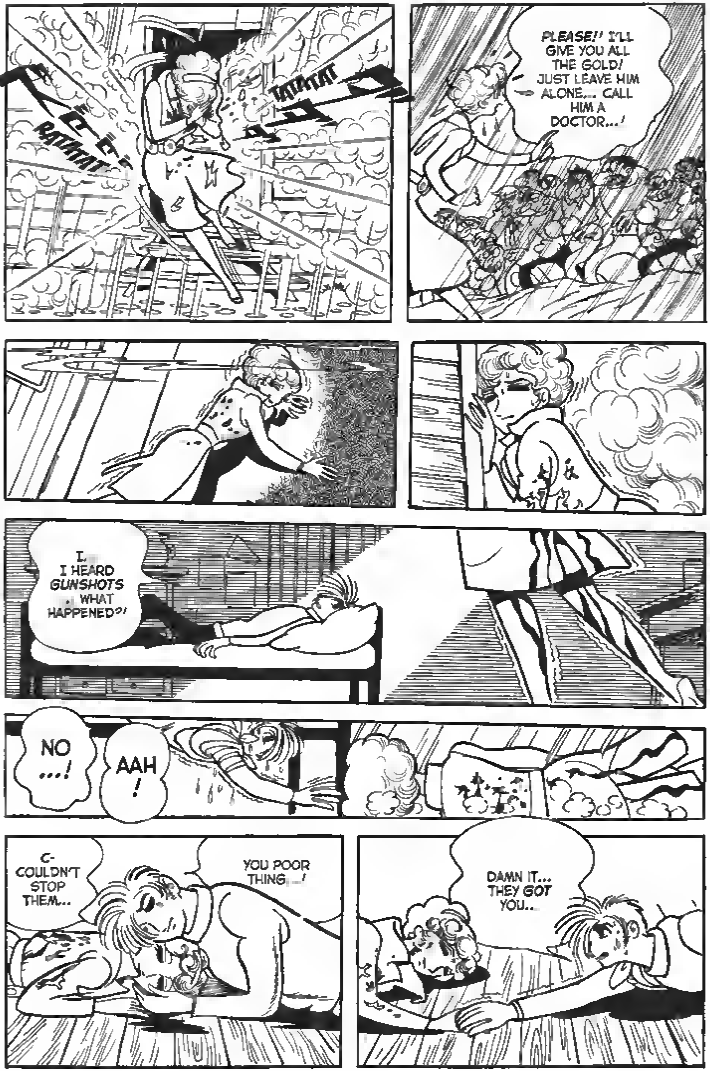
SO YOU KNOW WHY THERE'S GOLD HERE?
YES, I DO.
COME IN
WE'LL TALK INSIDE
WHAT IS IT? THE MOMENT I SAW THIS MAN, MY WHOLE BODY TREMBLED AS IF STRUCK BY LIGHTNING...!
LOOK, HERE— I'LL SHOW YOU!
GOLD... WORTHLESS ...? THAT'S CRAZY!
IN A FEW MONTHS, THERE'S GOING TO BE A PANIC! THE WORLD WILL BE OVERFLOWING WITH GOLD, AND ITS VALUE WILL HIT ROCK BOTTOM.
THE GOLD WILL BE WORTHLESS, HENRY.
MORE THAN I COULD EVER SPEND.. SO NOW WHAT?
HOW MUCH DO YOU FIGURE THIS IS WORTH? I'VE COLLECTED A TON ALREADY...

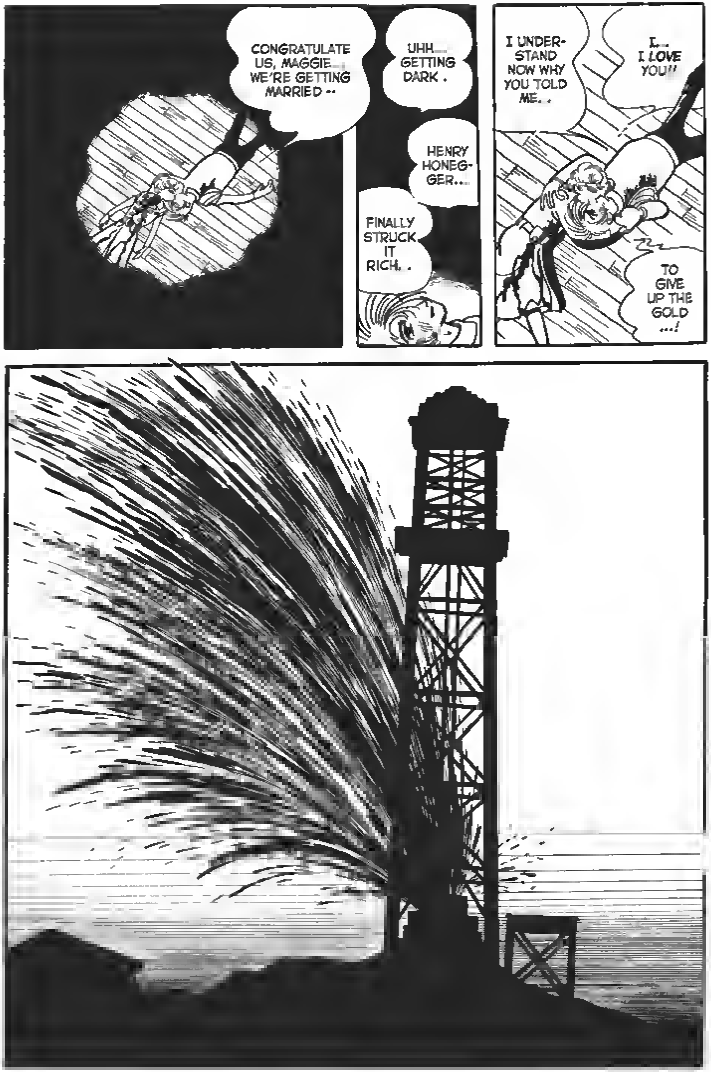
I'LL CIRCLE THE WORLD... HAVE VILLAS IN SWITZERLAND AND GREECE...
I COULD SPEND AND SPEND AND *STILL* HAVE *MORE!!*
BUT IN THE END, HE DIED *PENNILESS.*
HERE'S MY FATHER! HE WORKED HIS WHOLE LIFE ON THIS ISLAND, COVERED IN OIL...
YOU'RE ALMOST CHILD LIKE, AREN'T YOU?
BUY A *MANSION* WITH THIRTY-THREE ROOMS IN IT!
...!
IF PAPA WERE ALIVE, I'D WANT TO GIVE HIM ALL OF IT...!
POOR PAPA... HERE I AM NOW WITH SO *MUCH.*
*WHY WOULD SUCH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL COME HERE..?*
YOU'RE SO PRETTY ...!
*I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF ANYTHING BUT OIL... NEVER PAID A MIND TO WOMEN OR ROMANCE... BUT MY LIFE'S CHANGED NOW!*

THE POOR MAN... HE'S FULL OF JOY BECAUSE HE DOESN'T KNOW IN A FEW MONTHS HIS GOLD WILL BE WORTHLESS!
I FOUND GOLD AND NOW I'VE MET THIS BEAUTIFUL WOMAN! WHAT GREAT LUCK! I CAN'T IMAGINE A BETTER LIFE!
I'M SUPPOSED TO DESPISE AND SCORN THIS MAN.. BUT I DON'T HAVE THOSE FEELINGS -- WHY.. ?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING! IT'S ENOUGH JUST TO SEE YOUR EYES STARING BACK AT ME. .!
I HAVE TO CONVINCE HIM TO GIVE UP THE GOLD .. I CAN SAVE HIM IF I DO!

WRECK MY HAPPINESS WILL YA? I'LL KILL YOU!
HERE THEY COME . . .!
KBLAM
SMASSHH
YOU LITTLE BRAT!
PUNK KID!
KABLAM
AAAH !!
SPAKK
SPAKK
ARGHH!
KABLAM
BLAM
YOU CAN'T! GIVE THEM THE GOLD!! HURRY!!
HEH HEH HEH KEEP TRYIN'! I'LL KILL A HUNDRED OF YOU IF I HAVE TO...!

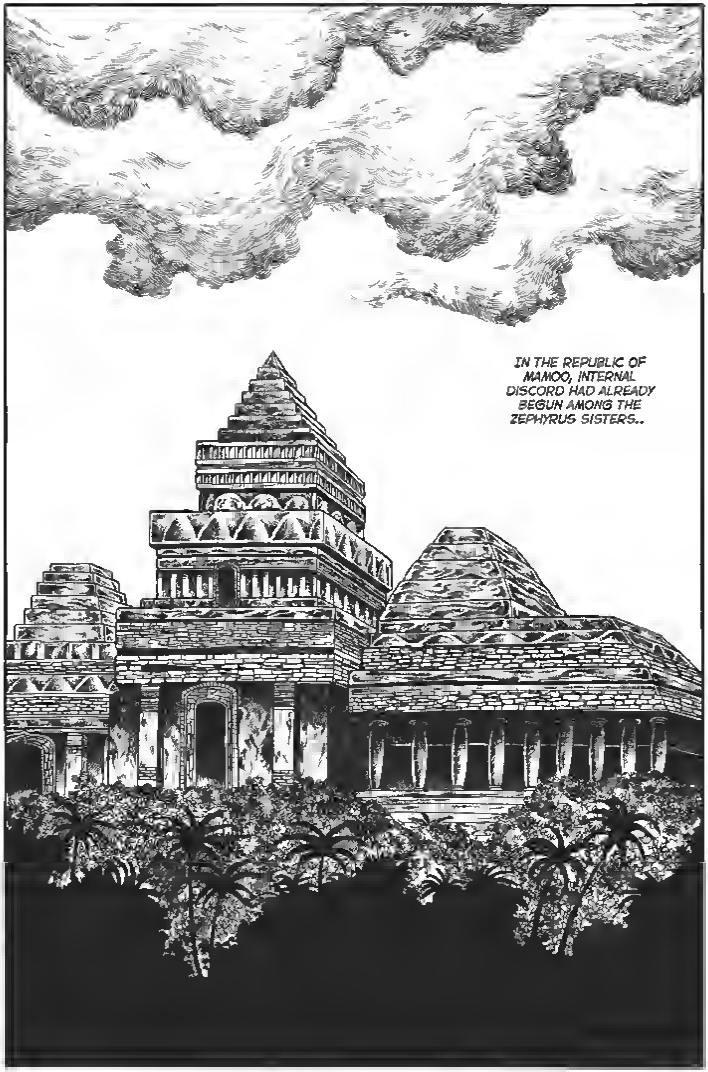
HENRY! YOUR SHOULDER...!
S-SHIT!
BLAM!
UGK!
YOU MUSTN'T MOVE!
JUST TIE IT UP -- THAT'S FINE.
HMPH!: A DOCTOR...? HE'LL JUST WANT MY GOLD, TOO!
I'LL... GET YOU TO A DOCTOR...!
HENRY, YOU'RE PALE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT..?
HERE!
WHERE.. ARE YOU..?
THEY'LL STORM IN HERE!
WHAT?! IF I DON'T...
I'LL GET A DOCTOR
HENRY!!!
MY EYES ARE HAZY.. CAN'T SEE TOO GOOD..
COME CLOSER... PLEASE


RATATATAT
RATATATAT
PLEASE!! I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE GOLD! JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE... CALL HIM A DOCTOR...!
I... I HEARD GUNSHOTS ... WHAT HAPPENED?!
NO ...!
AAH !
C- COULDN'T STOP THEM...
YOU POOR THING...!
DAMN IT... THEY GOT YOU..


CONGRATULATE US, MAGGIE... WE'RE GETTING MARRIED --
UHH... GETTING DARK.
HENRY HONEGGER...
FINALLY STRUCK IT RICH..
I UNDERSTAND NOW WHY YOU TOLD ME..
I... I LOVE YOU!!
TO GIVE UP THE GOLD ...!

CHAPTER 15

# INTERMEZZO

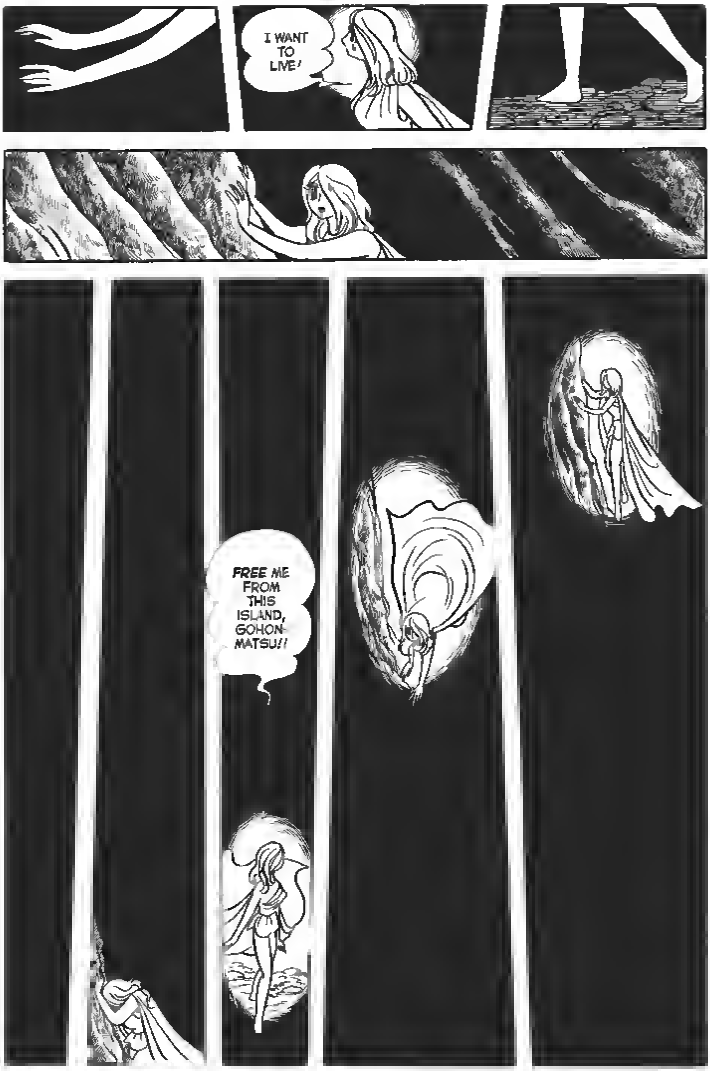

IN THE REPUBLIC OF MAMOO, INTERNAL DISCORD HAD ALREADY BEGUN AMONG THE ZEPHYRUS SISTERS..

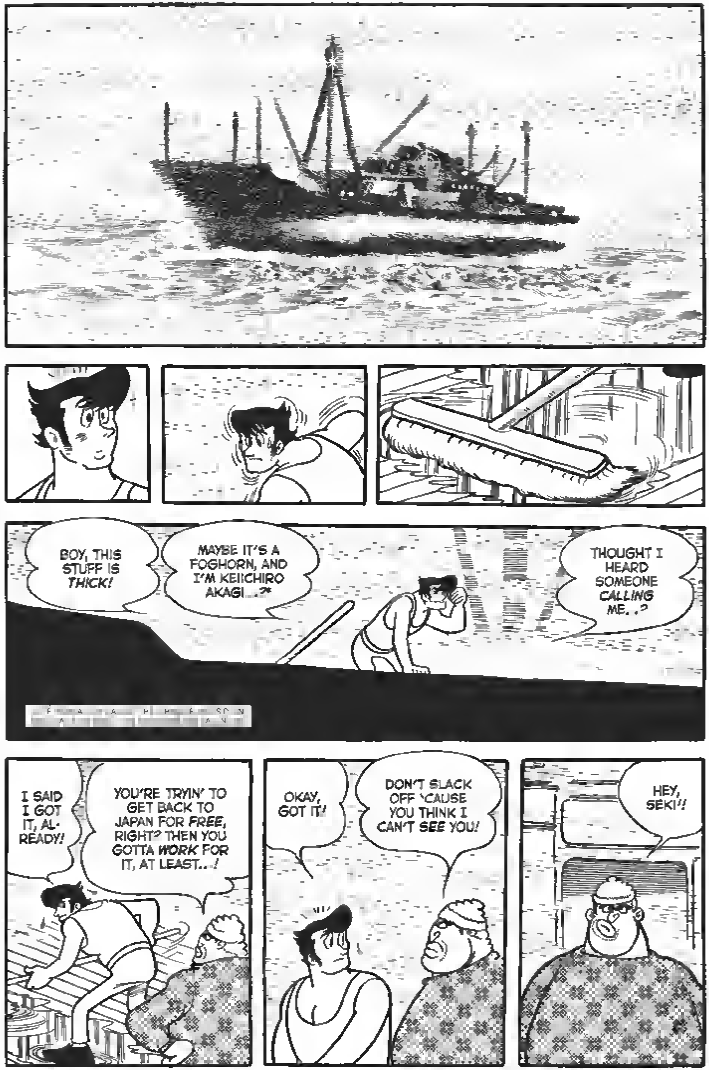
MILDA, YOUR ACTIONS ARE A BETRAYAL OF OUR SISTERLY UNION.
NEVER!
AND SWEAR TO *FORGET* GOHONMATSU SEKI!
YOU MUST BEG FORGIVENESS BEFORE OUR MOTHER....
YOU CAN'T STEAL GOHONMATSU FROM MY HEART, NO MATTER HOW YOU TRY... NO MATTER HOW YOU *THREATEN* ME, I WON'T FORGET HIM!
YOU WILL BE LOCKED AWAY, MILDA -- NEVER AGAIN TO SEE THE OUTSIDE WORLD!
IF THAT IS HOW YOU FEEL, WE HAVE NO CHOICE

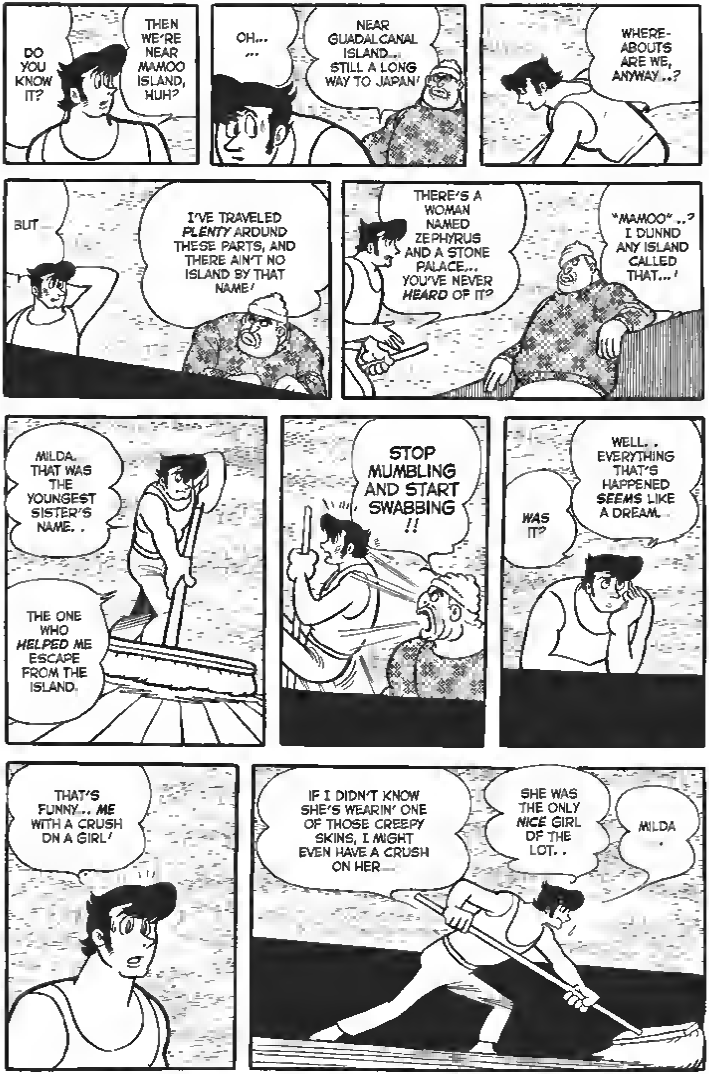
YES! YOUR FATE WILL BE TO LIVE IN THE DARK UNDERGROUND BENEATH MAMOO, SCROUNGING FOR FOOD LIKE A SEWER RAT...
UNTIL YOU GROW OLD AND DIE!
THAT IS YOUR PUNISHMENT!
I'M... A PRISONER?
WE ALONE WILL CARRY OUT OUR MOTHER'S REVENGE!
MILDA, JUST APOLOGIZE!
BUT THAT'S TOO CRUEL!
NO!!
GET UP!
I'LL HANG YOUR IMPERTINENT FACE LIKE A PLANT, TRAITOR!

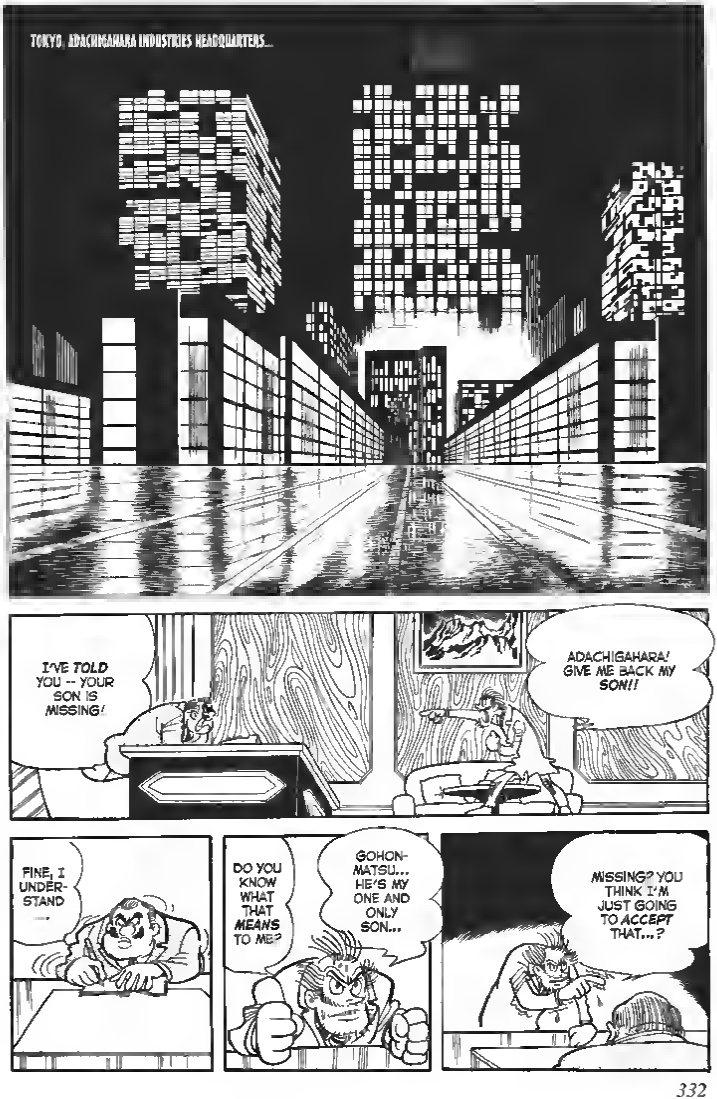
THE LAW OF ZEPHYRUS IS CLEAR!
PLEASE SPARE HER, EVA -- SHE'S OUR SISTER!
I'LL ASK AGAIN ... WILL YOU SEVER ALL TIES WITH GOHONMATSU?
NO ONE ESCAPES THE PIT BELOW THESE IRON BARS! ANOTHER PRISONER WENT MAD INSIDE -- AN APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT FOR A TRAITOR, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
KRRRK KRRRK!!
KRRRK
KRRRK

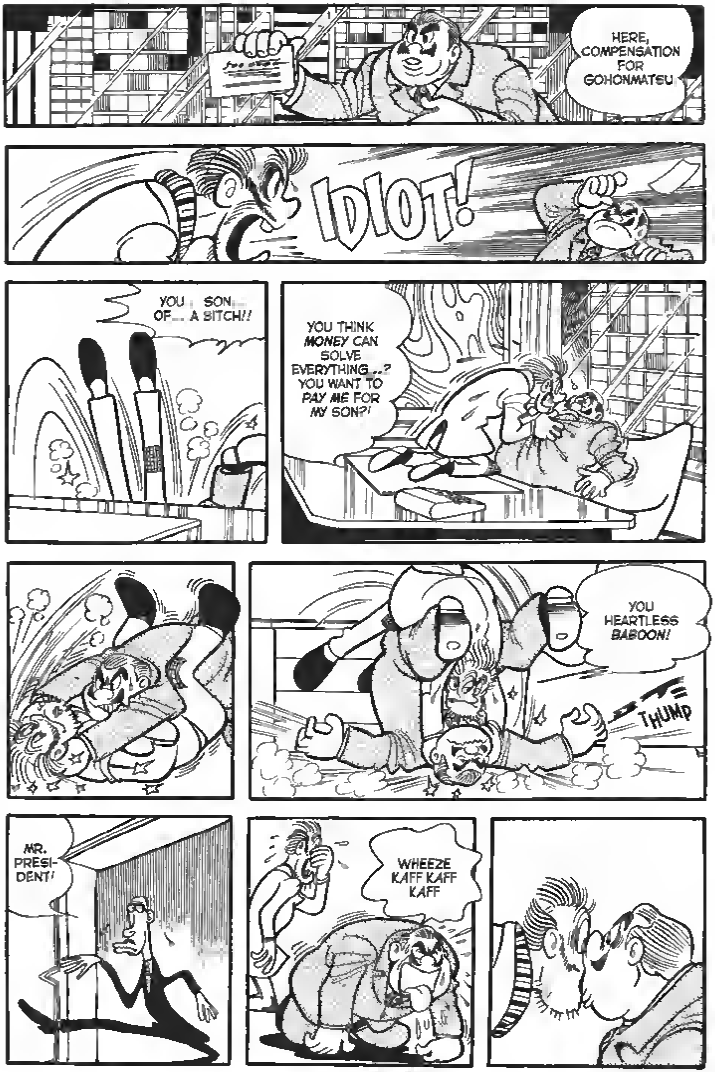
UNTIL THEN, YOU CAN FILL YOUR HEAD WITH THOUGHTS OF YOUR DRUNKARD ...!
THE NEXT TIME WE'LL SEE YOU IS IN TEN YEARS!
FOOD IS ALL YOU'LL RECEIVE ...
CLIP CLOP
CLIP CLOP
KRRNKKRRN
KRRNK
CSHANNK
...
...
W...WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER... NOT TO FORCE THAT SUFFERING ONTO YOUR OWN CHILD...?
MOTHER... HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL? EVEN IF YOU DID HAVE ALL YOUR HAPPINESS STOLEN AWAY FROM YOU.

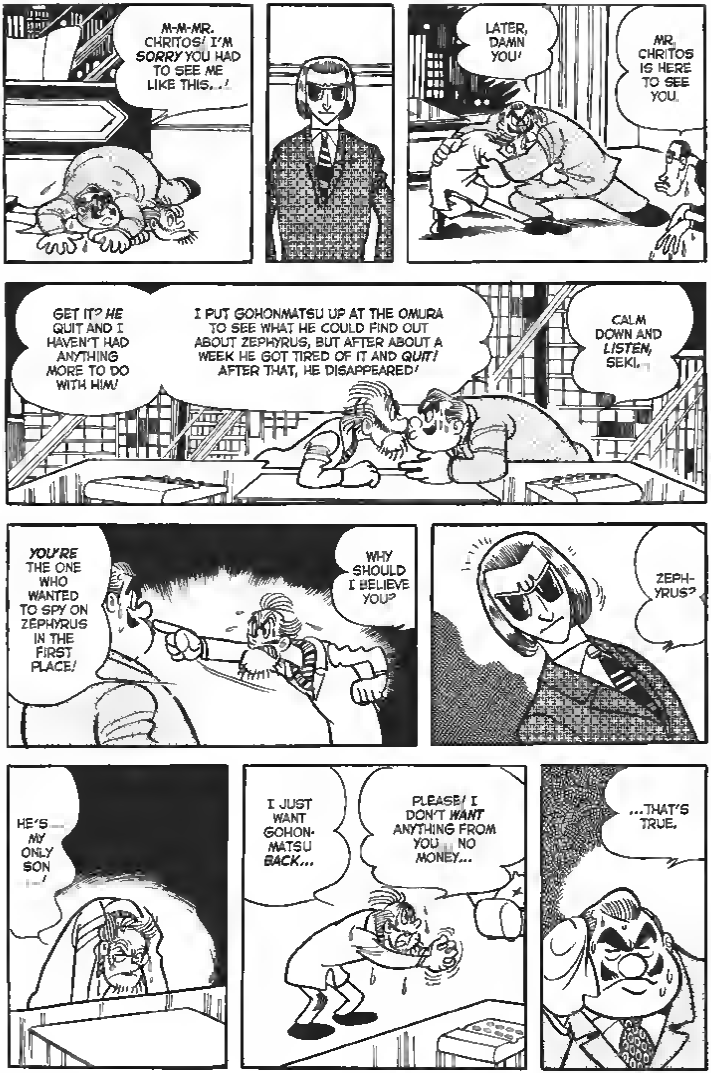

I WANT TO LIVE!
FREE ME FROM THIS ISLAND, GOHONMATSU!!


BOY, THIS STUFF IS THICK!
MAYBE IT'S A FOGHORN, AND I'M KEIICHIRO AKAGI...?*
THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE CALLING ME..?
I SAID I GOT IT, ALREADY!
YOU'RE TRYIN' TO GET BACK TO JAPAN FOR FREE, RIGHT? THEN YOU GOTTA WORK FOR IT, AT LEAST...!
OKAY, GOT IT!
DON'T SLACK OFF 'CAUSE YOU THINK I CAN'T SEE YOU!
HEY, SEKI*!


DO YOU KNOW IT?
THEN WE'RE NEAR MAMOO ISLAND, HUH?
OH... ...
NEAR GUADALCANAL ISLAND... STILL A LONG WAY TO JAPAN!
WHERE-ABOUTS ARE WE, ANYWAY...?
BUT...
I'VE TRAVELED *PLENTY* ARDUND THESE PARTS, AND THERE AIN'T NO ISLAND BY THAT NAME!
THERE'S A WOMAN NAMED ZEPHYRUS AND A STONE PALACE... YOU'VE NEVER *HEARD* OF IT?
"MAMOO"..? I DUNNO ANY ISLAND CALLED THAT...!
MILDA. THAT WAS THE YOUNGEST SISTER'S NAME..
THE ONE WHO *HELPED* ME ESCAPE FROM THE ISLAND.
STOP MUMBLING AND START SWABBING !!
WELL.. EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED *SEEMS* LIKE A DREAM..
*WAS* IT?
THAT'S FUNNY... *ME* WITH A CRUSH ON A GIRL!
IF I DIDN'T KNOW SHE'S WEARIN' ONE OF THOSE CREEPY SKINS, I MIGHT EVEN HAVE A CRUSH ON HER...
SHE WAS THE ONLY *NICE* GIRL OF THE LOT..
MILDA

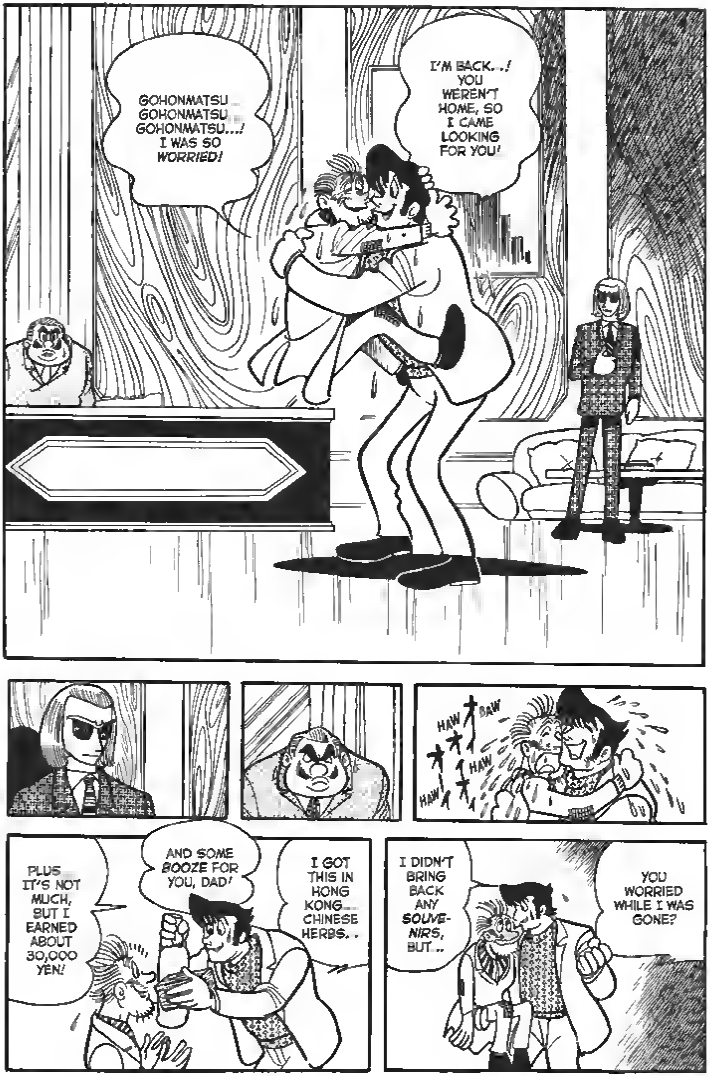

TOKYO, ADACHIGAHARA INDUSTRIES HEADQUARTERS...
I'VE TOLD YOU -- YOUR SON IS MISSING!
ADACHIGAHARA! GIVE ME BACK MY SON!!
FINE, I UNDER-STAND --
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS TO ME?
GOHON-MATSU... HE'S MY ONE AND ONLY SON...
MISSING? YOU THINK I'M JUST GOING TO ACCEPT THAT...?

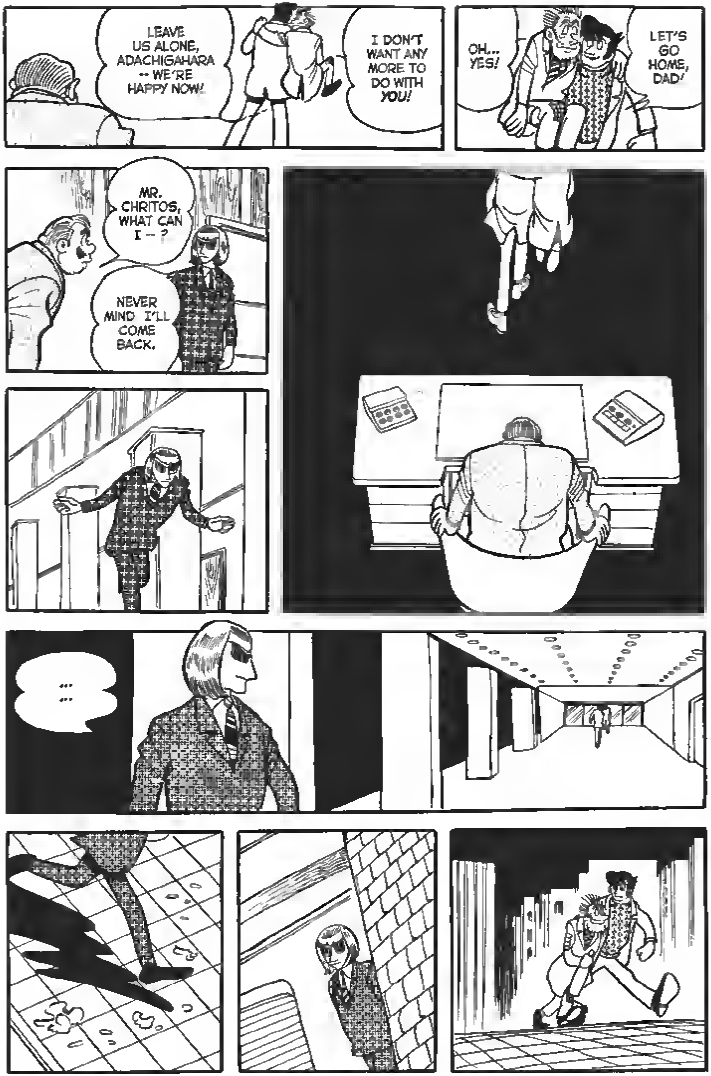

HERE, COMPENSATION FOR GOHONMATSU
IDIOT!
YOU ! SON... OF... A BITCH!!
YOU THINK *MONEY* CAN SOLVE EVERYTHING...? YOU WANT TO *PAY ME* FOR *MY* SON?!
YOU HEARTLESS *BABOON!*
THUMP
MR. PRESI-DENT!
WHEEZE KAFF KAFF KAFF

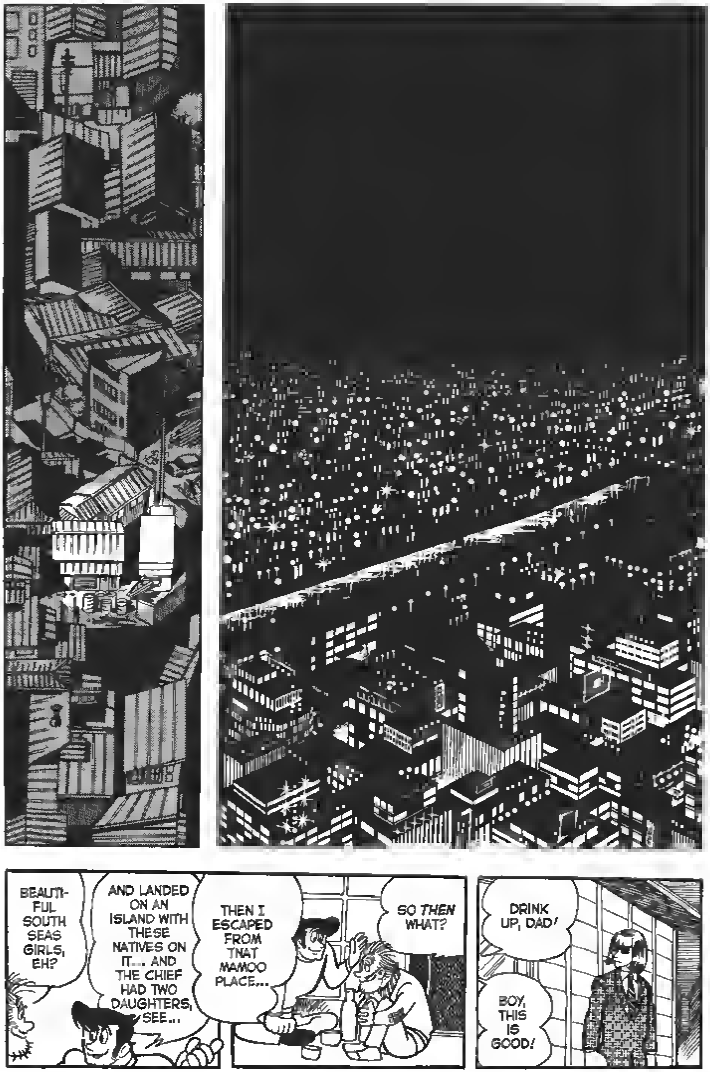

M-M-MR. CHRITOS! I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO SEE ME LIKE THIS...!
LATER, DAMN YOU!
MR. CHRITOS IS HERE TO SEE YOU.
GET IT? HE QUIT AND I HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING MORE TO DO WITH HIM!
I PUT GOHONMATSU UP AT THE OMURA TO SEE WHAT HE COULD FIND OUT ABOUT ZEPHYRUS, BUT AFTER ABOUT A WEEK HE GOT TIRED OF IT AND QUIT! AFTER THAT, HE DISAPPEARED!
CALM DOWN AND LISTEN, SEKI.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO SPY ON ZEPHYRUS IN THE FIRST PLACE!
WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU?
ZEPH-YRUS?
HE'S... MY ONLY SON...!
I JUST WANT GOHON-MATSU BACK...
PLEASE! I DON'T WANT ANYTHING FROM YOU... NO MONEY...
...THAT'S TRUE.

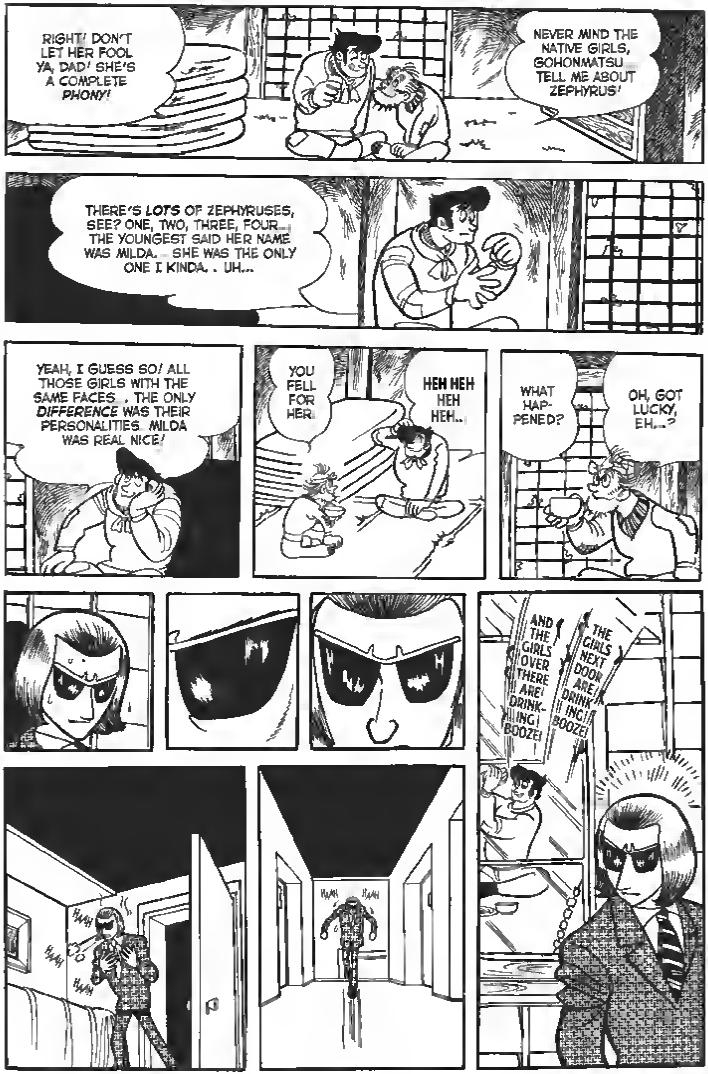
AND WHEN I PASSED OUT, HE'D LAY ME IN THE FUTON WITH A HOT WATER BOTTLE!
WE'D OFTEN DRINK TOGETHER . .
BUT NO CHILD EVER HAD MORE LOVE FOR HIS FATHER!
ADACHIGAHARA . . MAYBE YOU THINK HE WAS JUST A VULGAR, USELESS DRUNK...
TO ME, GOHONMATSU WAS THE GREATEST SON IN THE WORLD! WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, EH?
HE GAVE ME MOST OF WHAT HE EARNED. . IT MADE ME FEEL SO SMALL TO KNOW HE NEVER HAD ANY MONEY LEFT FOR HIMSELF!
I'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND FIND GOHONMATSU . . I PROMISE!
ALL RIGHT! I UNDERSTAND. . I REALLY DO!
THIS LITTLE KITE SIRED A FALCON ...!
YOU'VE GOT A DAUGHTER... NANA, OR SOMETHING, RIGHT? HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?
"HMPH!: ALL THESE GIANT COMPANIES YOU OWN...
I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR YOUR CHARITY!
WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT TO ME?!
I'VE GOT PLENTY OF JOBS OPEN . . WHY DON'T YOU LET ME FIND YOU ONE YOU'D LIKE?
YOU NEED TO EARN A LIVING, DON'T YOU, SEKI?

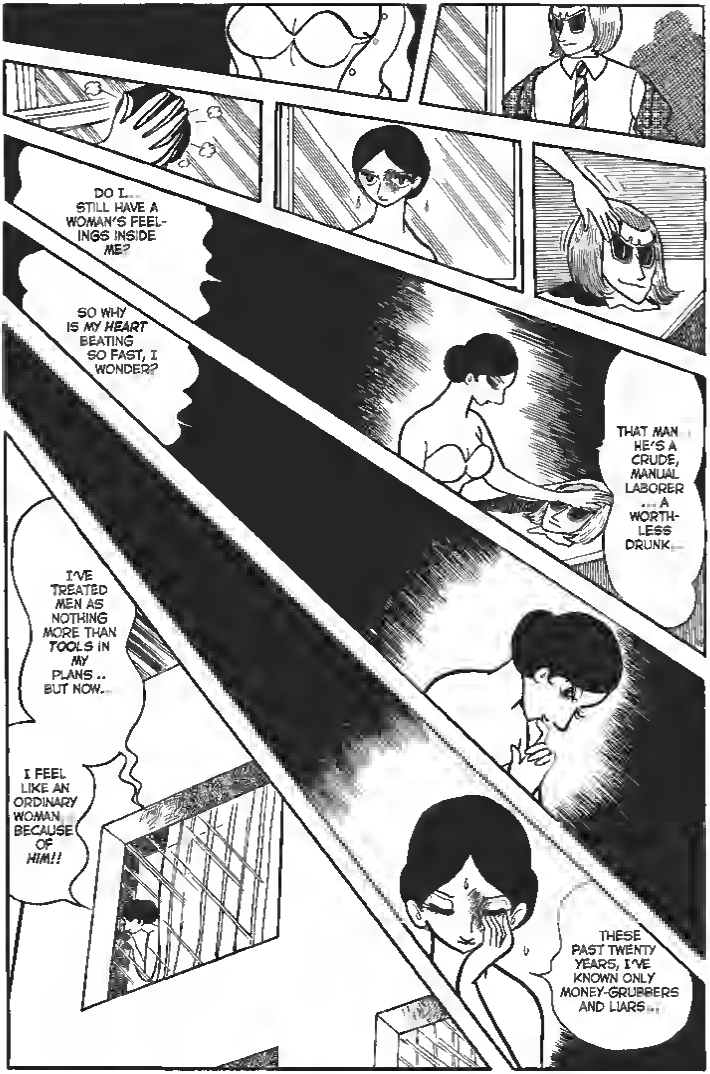
YOU THINK MONEY IS THE BASIS OF HUMAN WORTH? WAS THE BUDDHA BORN THANKS TO THE POWER OF MONEY?
YOU THINK PEOPLE WITH MONEY ARE BETTER?
YOU COULD HAVE ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD... WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THAT?
MONEY JUST ROLLS IN WHILE YOU SIT!
YES, SIR... NAMED GOHON-MATSU, I THINK
A SAILOR?
A RATHER ROUGH-LOOKING SAILOR HAS ARRIVED . HE SAYS AN ELDERLY MAN NAMED ICHIMATSU SEKI IS WITH YOU, AND HE INSISTS ON SEEING HIM.
MY SON!!
GOHONMATSU!!
SON!
HOWDY, OLD MAN!


GOHONMATSU... GOHONMATSU... GOHONMATSU...! I WAS SO WORRIED!
I'M BACK..! YOU WEREN'T HOME, SO I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU!
HAW HAW HAW HAW
PLUS... IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT I EARNED ABOUT 30,000 YEN!
AND SOME BOOZE FOR YOU, DAD!
I GOT THIS IN HONG KONG... CHINESE HERBS..
I DIDN'T BRING BACK ANY SOUVENIRS, BUT..
YOU WORRIED WHILE I WAS GONE?


LEAVE US ALONE, ADACHIGAHARA -- WE'RE HAPPY NOW!
I DON'T WANT ANY MORE TO DO WITH YOU!
OH... YES!
LET'S GO HOME, DAD!
MR. CHRITOS, WHAT CAN I -- ?
NEVER MIND I'LL COME BACK.
...
...

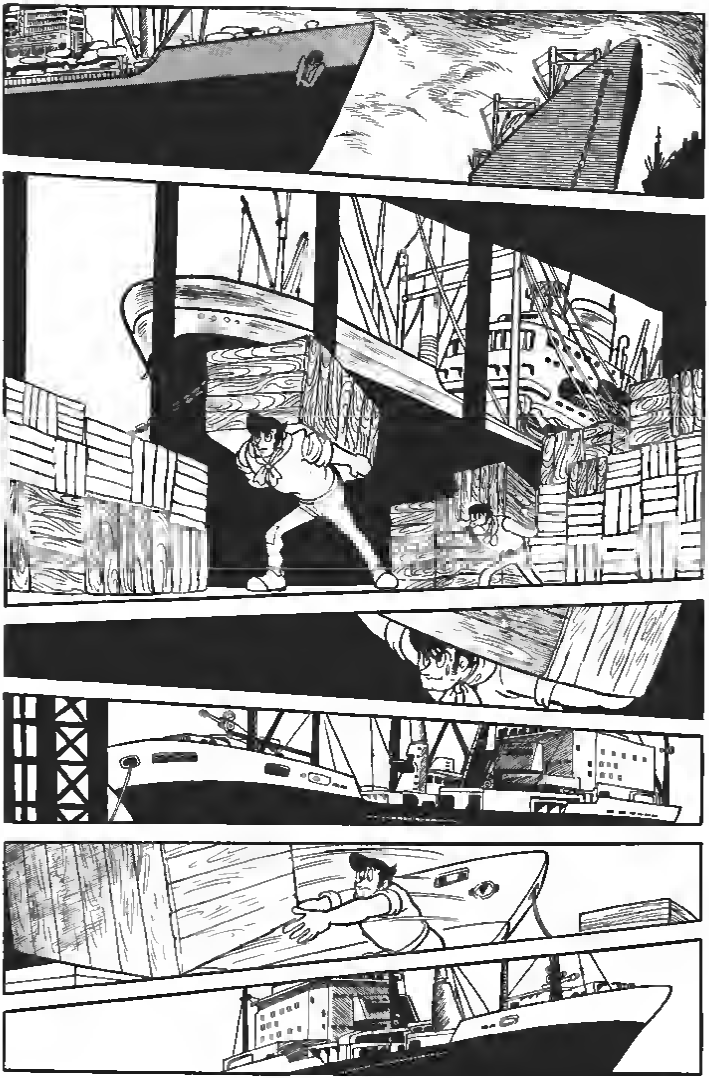

BEAUTIFUL SOUTH SEAS GIRLS, EH?
AND LANDED ON AN ISLAND WITH THESE NATIVES ON IT... AND THE CHIEF HAD TWO DAUGHTERS, SEE...
THEN I ESCAPED FROM THAT MAMOO PLACE...
SO *THEN* WHAT?
DRINK UP, DAD!
BOY, THIS IS GOOD!

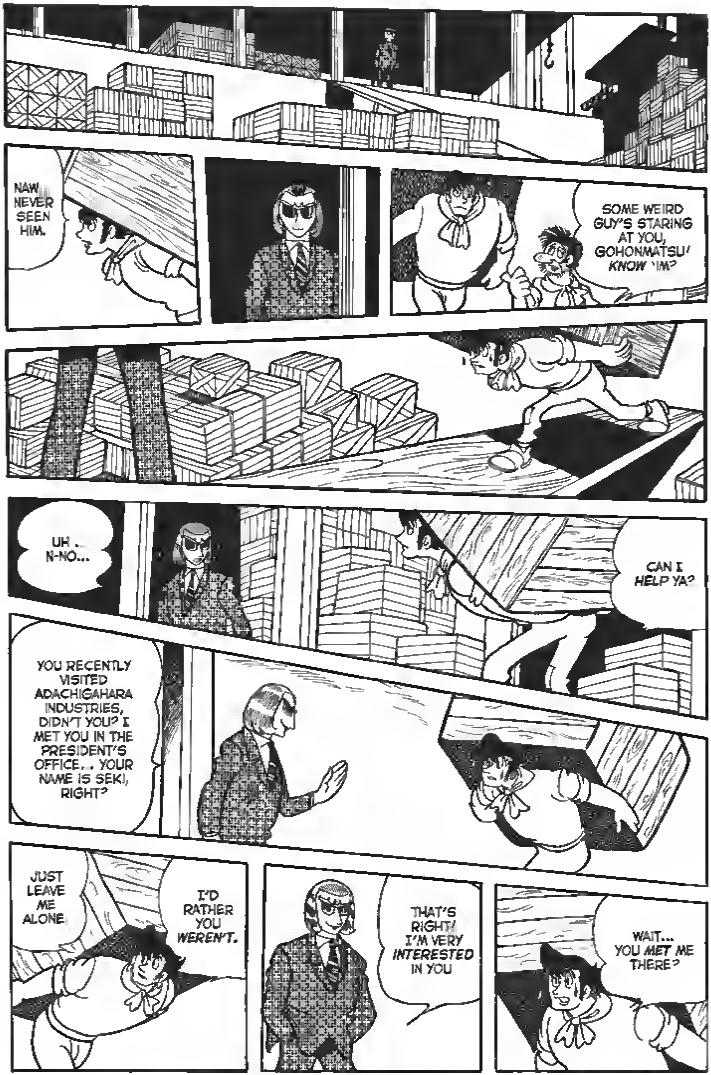

RIGHT! DON'T LET HER FOOL YA, DAD! SHE'S A COMPLETE *PHONY*!
NEVER MIND THE NATIVE GIRLS, GOHONMATSU... TELL ME ABOUT ZEPHYRUS!
THERE'S *LOTS* OF ZEPHYRUSES, SEE? ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR... THE YOUNGEST SAID HER NAME WAS MILDA. SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE I KINDA. . UH...
YEAH, I GUESS SO! ALL THOSE GIRLS WITH THE SAME FACES. . THE ONLY *DIFFERENCE* WAS THEIR PERSONALITIES. MILDA WAS REAL NICE!
YOU FELL FOR HER!
HEH HEH HEH...
WHAT HAP-PENED?
OH, GOT LUCKY, EH...?
AND THE GIRLS OVER THERE ARE DRINK-ING! BOOZE!
THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR ARE DRINK-ING! BOOZE!


THESE PAST TWENTY YEARS, I'VE KNOWN ONLY MONEY-GRUBBERS AND LIARS...
I FEEL LIKE AN ORDINARY WOMAN BECAUSE OF HIM!!
I'VE TREATED MEN AS NOTHING MORE THAN TOOLS IN MY PLANS .. BUT NOW...
THAT MAN HE'S A CRUDE, MANUAL LABORER ... A WORTHLESS DRUNK...
SO WHY IS MY HEART BEATING SO FAST, I WONDER?
DO I... STILL HAVE A WOMAN'S FEELINGS INSIDE ME?

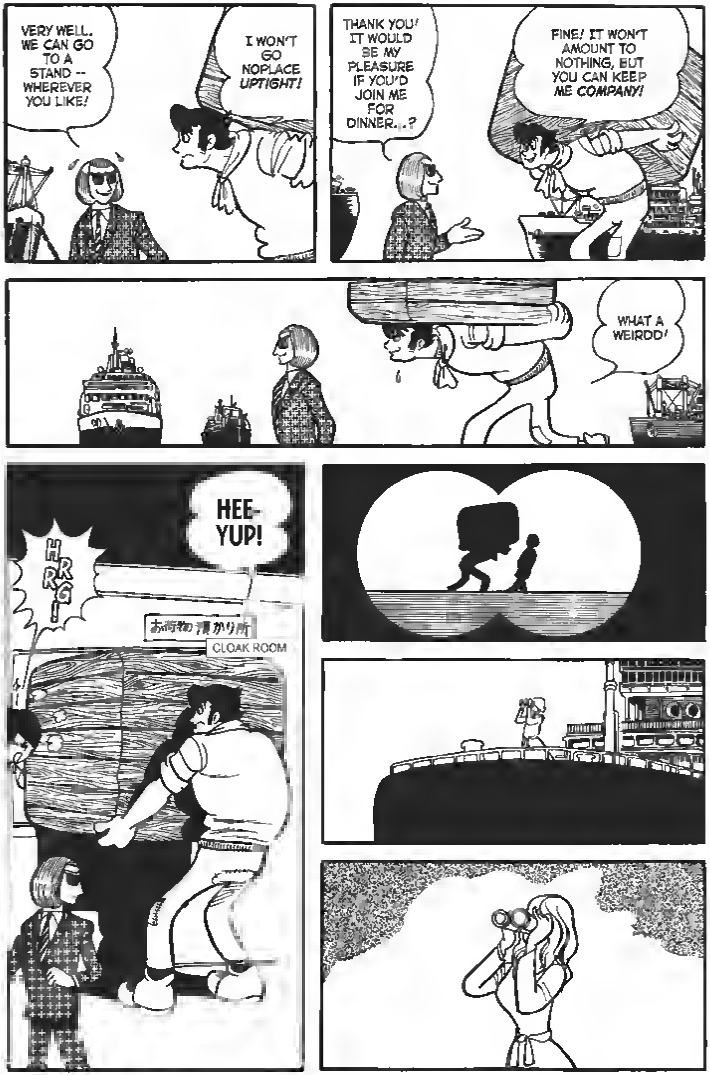
CHAPTER 16

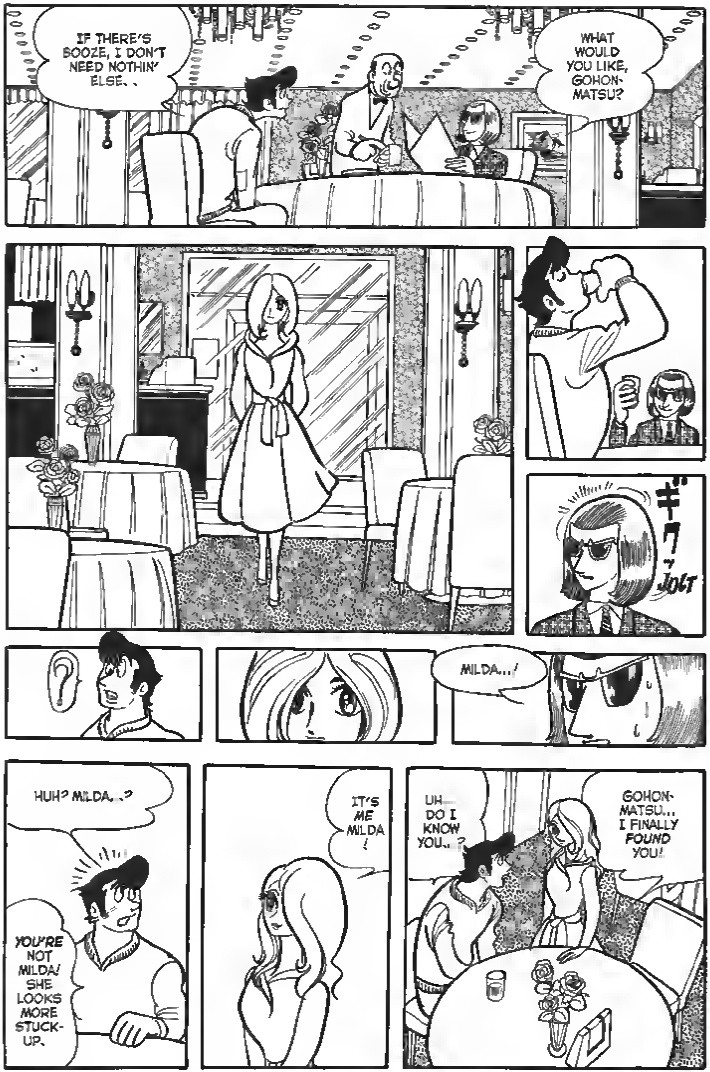
# FUGUE

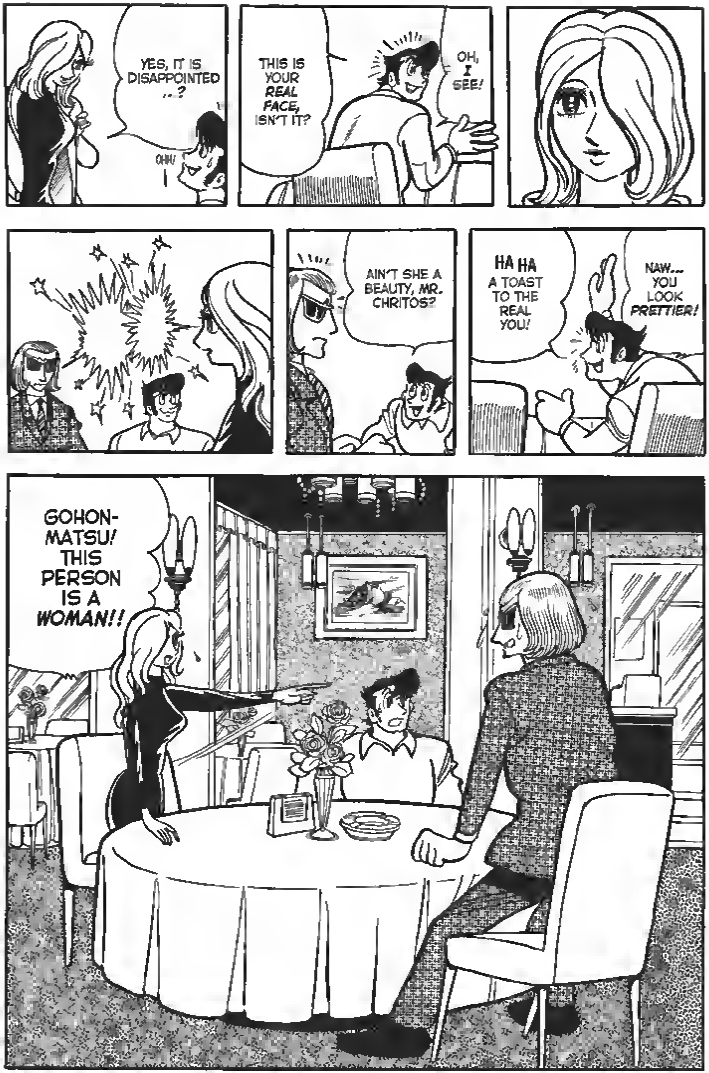



NAW, I NEVER SEEN HIM.
SOME WEIRD GUY'S STARING AT YOU, GOHONMATSU! *KNOW* 'IM?
UH... N-NO...
CAN I *HELP* YA?
YOU RECENTLY VISITED ADACHIGAHARA INDUSTRIES, DIDN'T YOU? I MET YOU IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE.. YOUR NAME IS SEKI, RIGHT?
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
I'D RATHER YOU *WEREN'T*.
THAT'S RIGHT! I'M VERY *INTERESTED* IN YOU
WAIT... YOU *MET* ME THERE?

SORRY I MADE YOU CURIOUS.
A YOUNG MAN LIKE YOU IS RARE INDEED! I'VE MET PLENTY OF CONNIVING INDIVIDUALS IN MY TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE YOU!
IN A WORLD POISONED BY MATERIALISM...
I FIND YOU QUITE IMPRESSIVE
IF THAT'S IT, I'M KINDA BUSY.
MY CARD MONTE CHRITOS IS THE NAME.
PLEASE DON'T MISUNDERSTAND — IT'S AN HONEST INTEREST.
I CONFESS, I EVEN WENT TO YOUR HOME!
I AM NOT AN INSURANCE SALESMAN!
THEN YOU'LL SIGN ME UP FOR LIFE INSURANCE, RIGHT?
JUST A MOMENT PLEASE, GOHONMATSU... I'D LIKE TO BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WOULD YOU AGREE TO MEET ME SOCIALLY?
LISTEN I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU MORE, THAT'S ALL I'D LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU!!

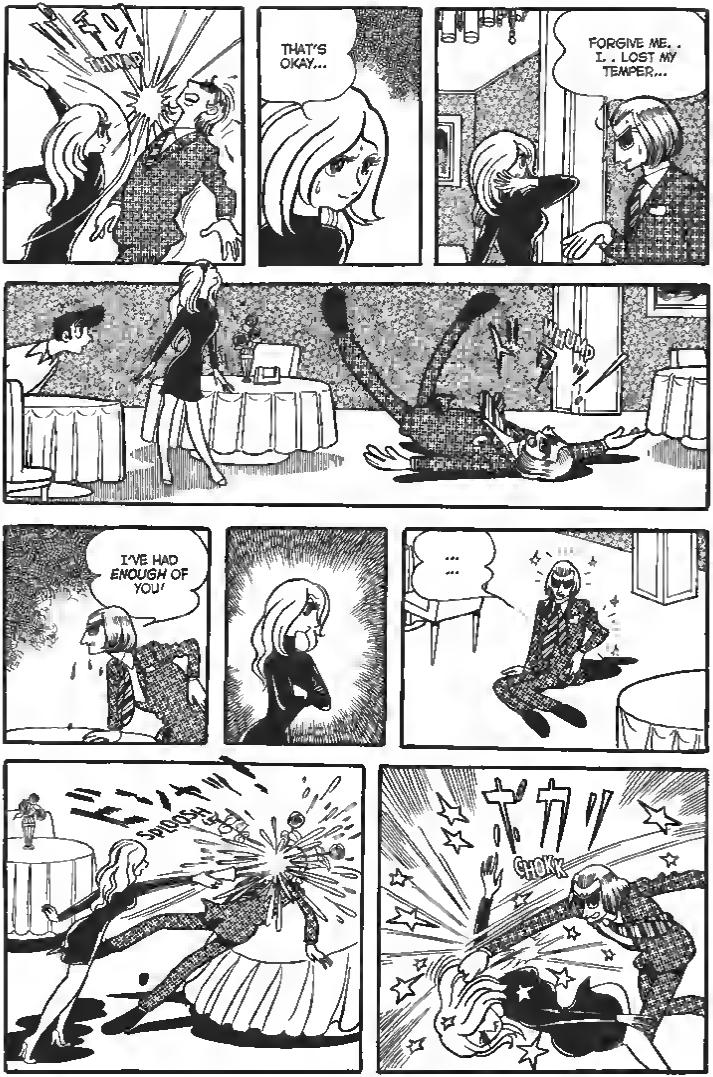

VERY WELL. WE CAN GO TO A STAND -- WHEREVER YOU LIKE!
I WON'T GO NOPLACE UPTIGHT!
THANK YOU! IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE IF YOU'D JOIN ME FOR DINNER...?
FINE! IT WON'T AMOUNT TO NOTHING, BUT YOU CAN KEEP ME COMPANY!
WHAT A WEIRDO!
HEE-YUP!
HRRG!
お荷物 預かり所
CLOAK ROOM

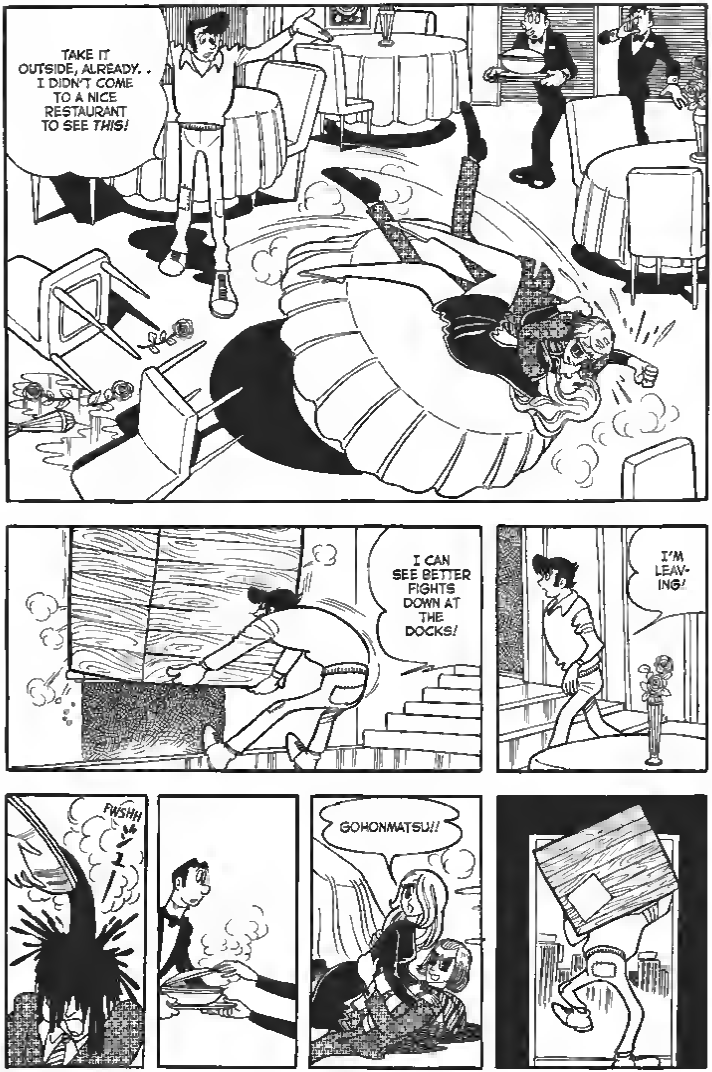

IF THERE'S BOOZE, I DON'T NEED NOTHIN' ELSE. .
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE, GOHON-MATSU?
ギク!
Jolt
MILDA...!
HUH? MILDA. .?
YOU'RE NOT MILDA! SHE LOOKS MORE STUCK-UP.
IT'S ME MILDA!
UH... DO I KNOW YOU. .?
GOHON-MATSU... I FINALLY FOUND YOU!

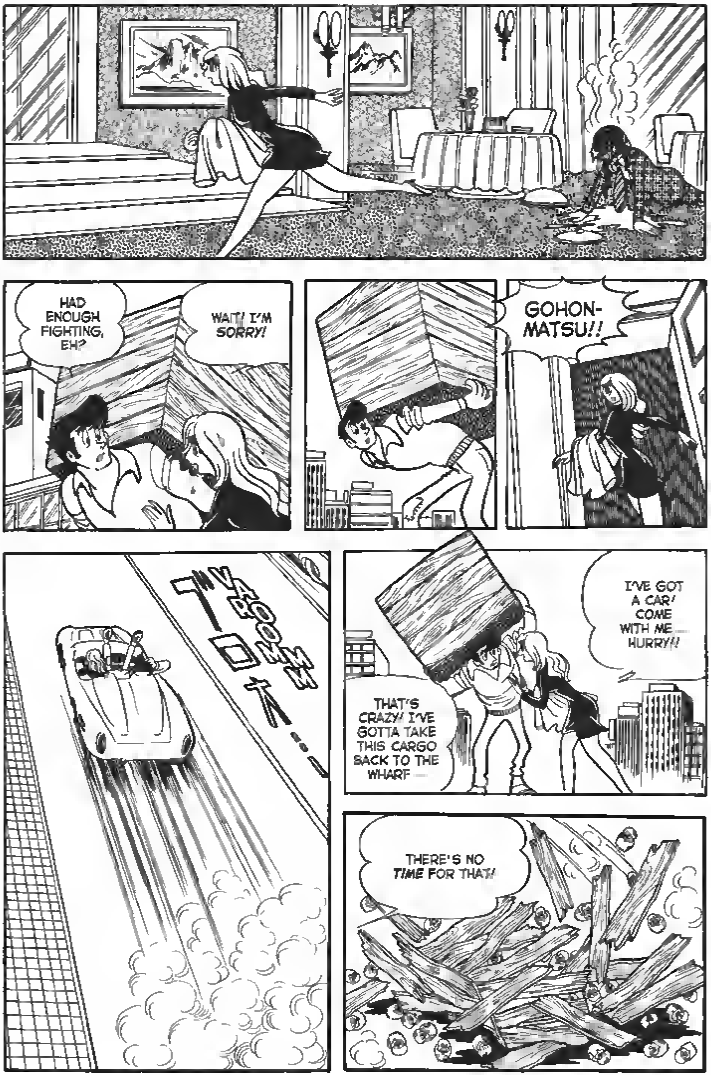

YES, IT IS DISAPPOINTED ..?
OHH!
THIS IS YOUR REAL FACE, ISN'T IT?
OH, I SEE!
AIN'T SHE A BEAUTY, MR. CHRITOS?
HA HA A TOAST TO THE REAL YOU!
NAW... YOU LOOK PRETTIER!
GOHON-MATSU! THIS PERSON IS A WOMAN!!

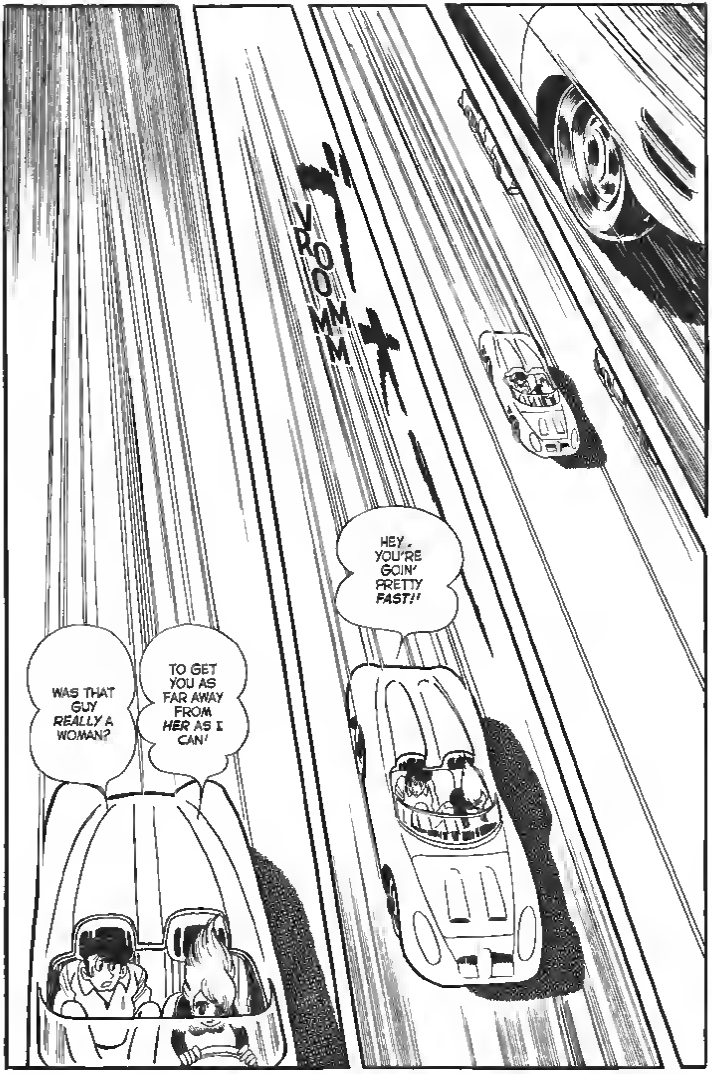
A WOMAN? BUT HIS NAME'S MONTE CHRITOS... HE GAVE ME A BUSINESS CARD...!
DON'T BE FOOLED GOHONMATSU ...!
INSOLENT WOMAN...! THIS *IS* A MASK..
A *MASK*?! YOU'RE KIDDING!
WHUH ...?!
IT'S DERMOID Z -- SYNTHETIC SKIN!
BUT IF YOU WISH TO SEE MY TRUE FACE, THEN I'LL GLADLY *SHOW* YOU!
HUH?! HE LOOKS JUST THE *SAME*!

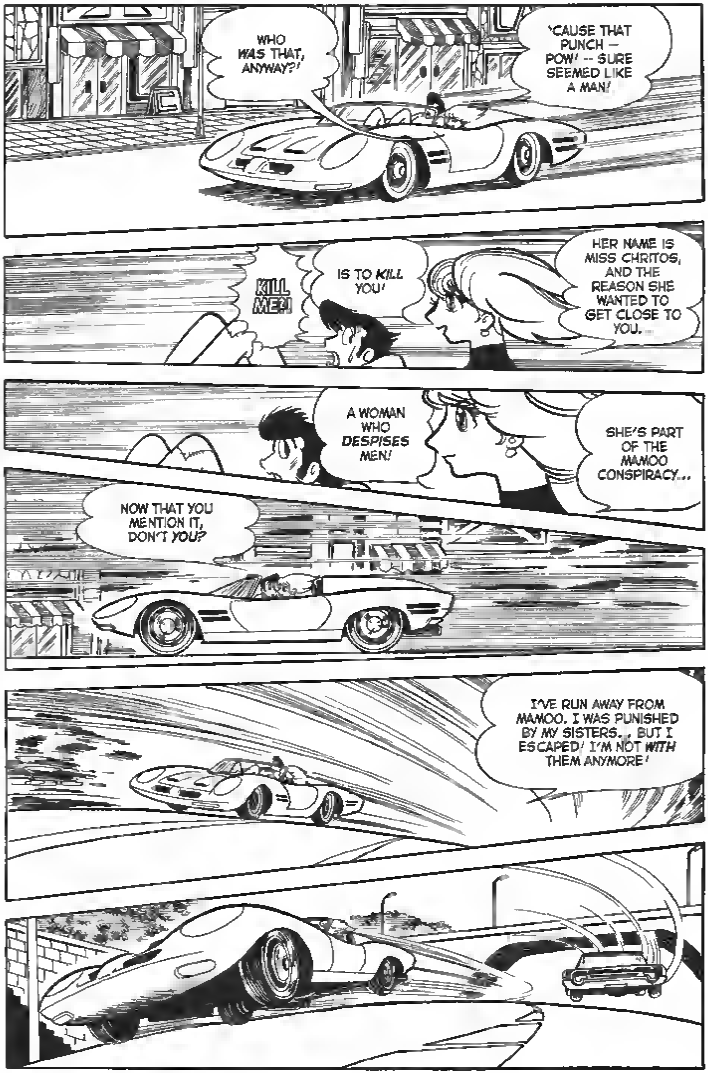
THAT'S A MASK, TOO! HER REAL FACE IS UNDERNEATH!!
HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH..
LIKE A BOOK WITH TWO COVERS!
WHY DON'T YOU SHOW US THAT?
QUITE CARE-FUL, AREN'T YOU?
THE SAME AGAIN! IT'S LIKE PEELING AN ONION!
WHAP
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! YOU WON'T TAKE GOHONMATSU NO MATTER HOW MANY DISGUISES YOU WEAR!
WHO IS THIS WOMAN? WHY IS SHE PRO-VOKING ME LIKE THIS?!
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO INSULTED IN MY LIFE!

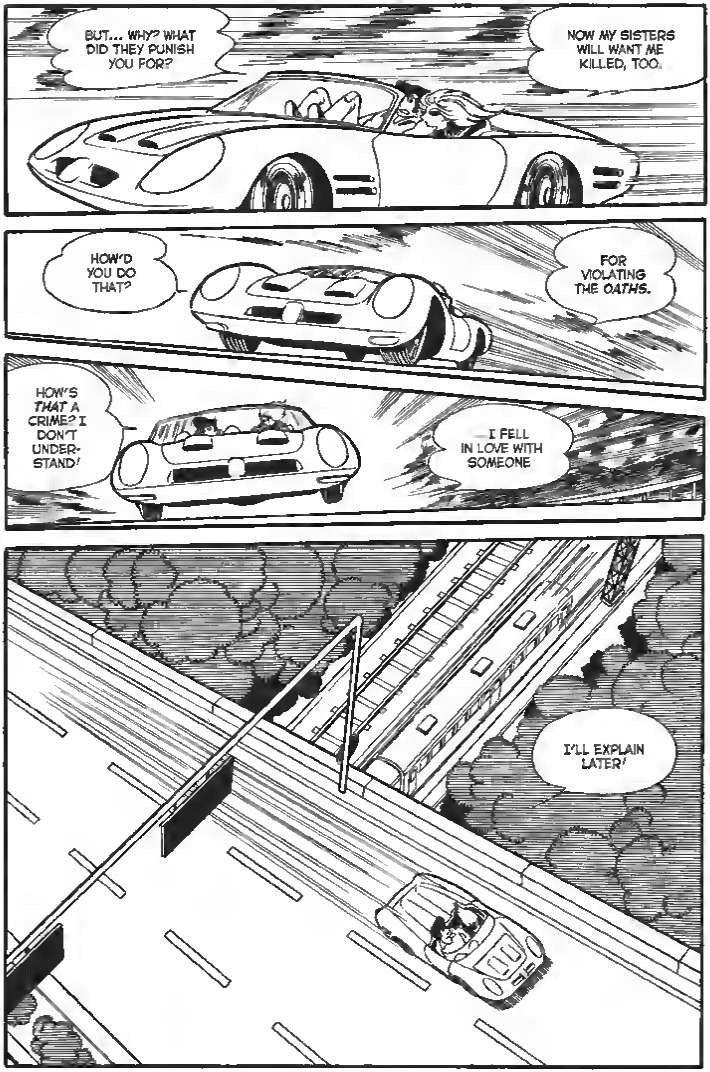

SLAP
THAT'S OKAY...
FORGIVE ME.. I.. LOST MY TEMPER...
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!
...
SPLASH
CHOKK

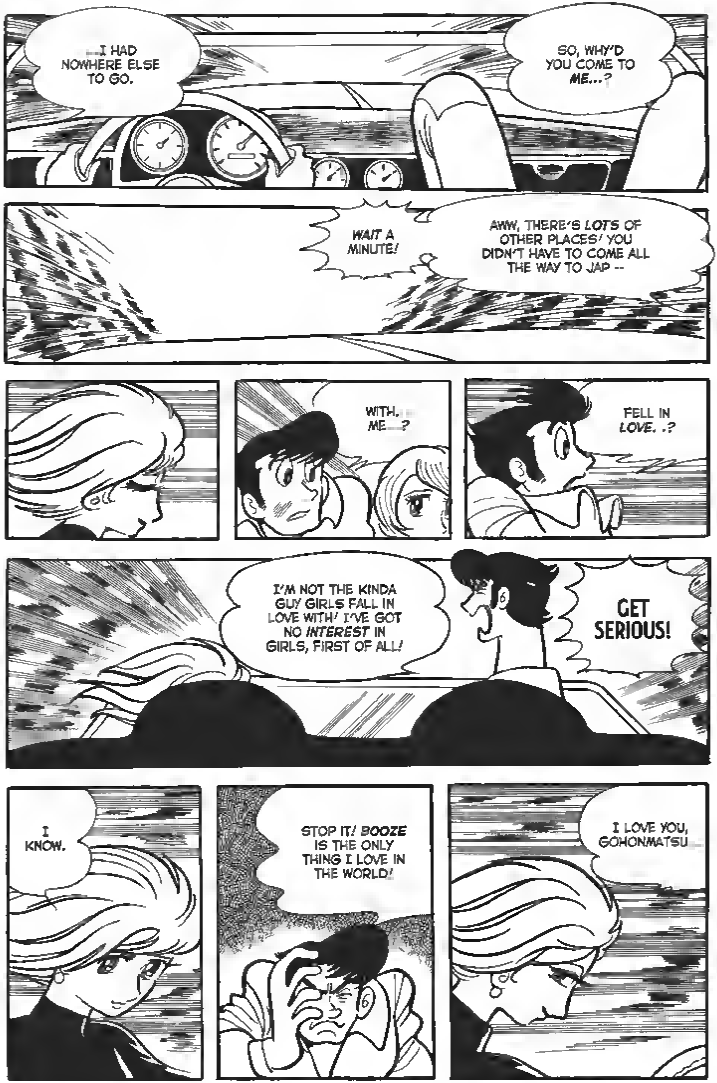

TAKE IT OUTSIDE, ALREADY. . I DIDN'T COME TO A NICE RESTAURANT TO SEE *THIS!*
I CAN SEE BETTER FIGHTS DOWN AT THE DOCKS!
I'M LEAV-ING!
FWSHH
GOHONMATSU!!

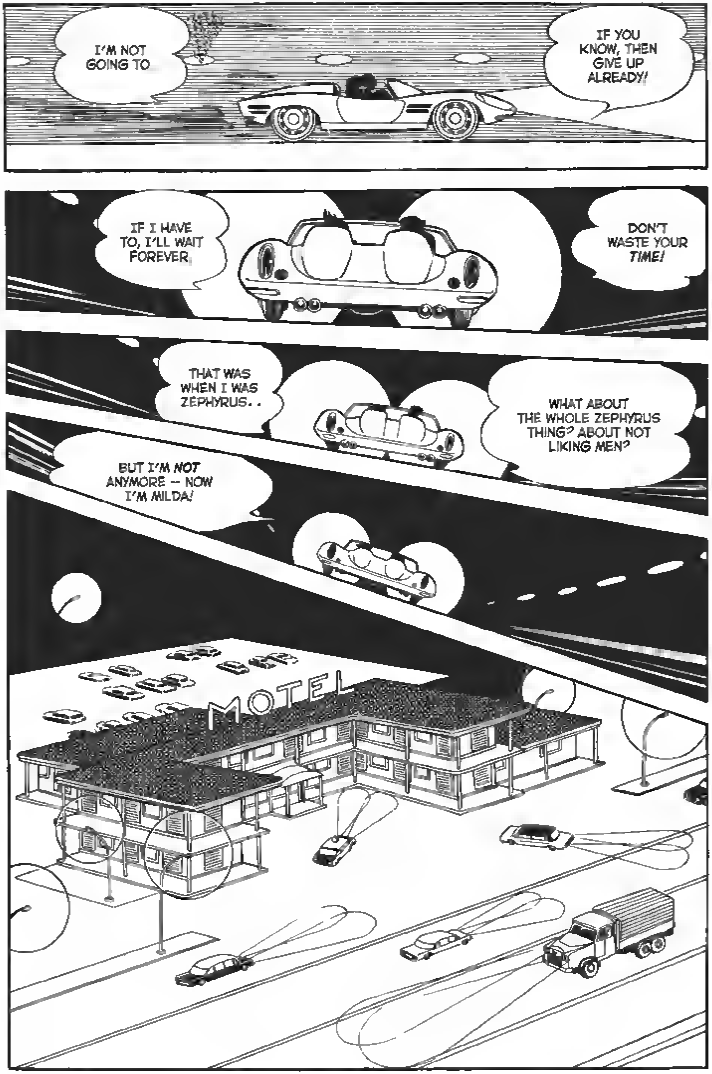

HAD ENOUGH FIGHTING, EH?
WAIT! I'M SORRY!
GOHON-MATSU!!
I'VE GOT A CAR! COME WITH ME— HURRY!!
THAT'S CRAZY! I'VE GOTTA TAKE THIS CARGO BACK TO THE WHARF—
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT!

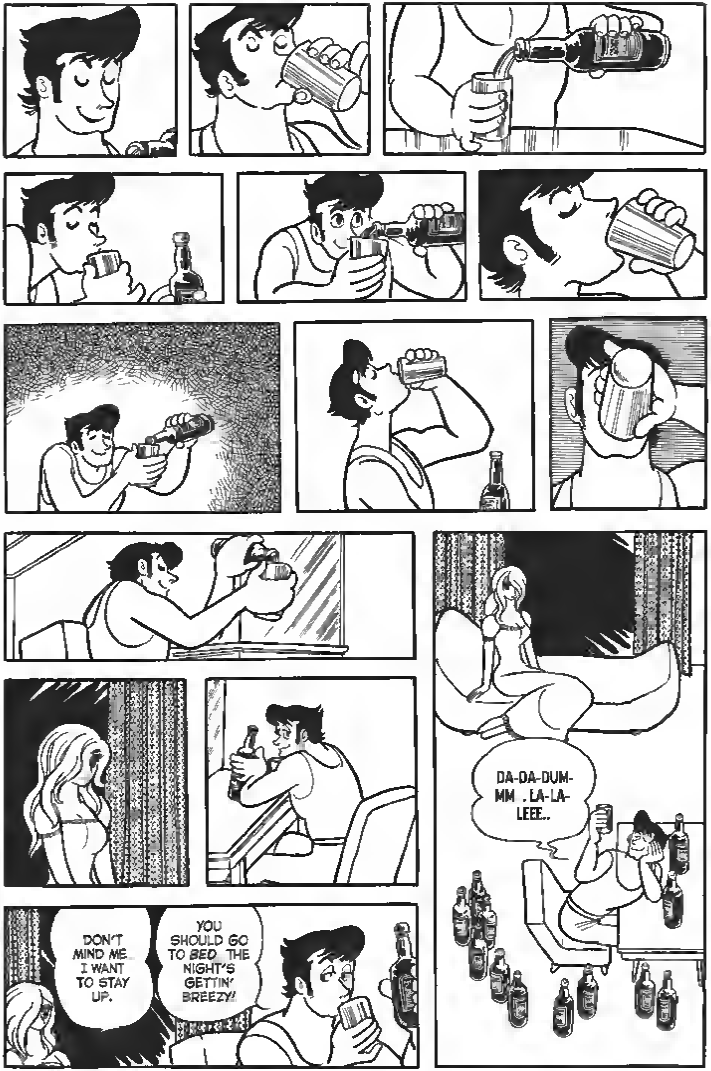

VROOMM
HEY, YOU'RE GOIN' PRETTY FAST!!
TO GET YOU AS FAR AWAY FROM HER AS I CAN!
WAS THAT GUY REALLY A WOMAN?


WHO WAS THAT, ANYWAY?!
'CAUSE THAT PUNCH — POW! — SURE SEEMED LIKE A MAN!
KILL ME!
IS TO KILL YOU!
HER NAME IS MISS CHRITOS, AND THE REASON SHE WANTED TO GET CLOSE TO YOU...
A WOMAN WHO DESPISES MEN!
SHE'S PART OF THE MAMOO CONSPIRACY...
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, DON'T YOU?
I'VE RUN AWAY FROM MAMOO. I WAS PUNISHED BY MY SISTERS... BUT I ESCAPED! I'M NOT WITH THEM ANYMORE!


BUT... WHY? WHAT DID THEY PUNISH YOU FOR?
NOW MY SISTERS WILL WANT ME KILLED, TOO.
HOW'D YOU DO THAT?
FOR VIOLATING THE OATHS.
HOW'S THAT A CRIME? I DON'T UNDER-STAND!
I FELL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE
I'LL EXPLAIN LATER!

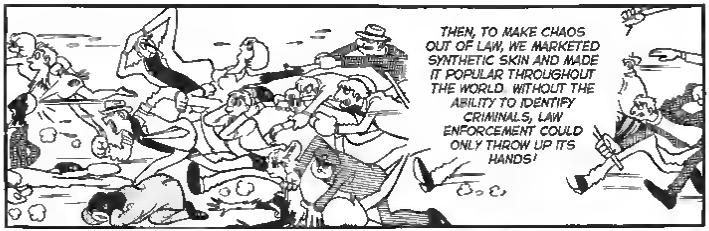

...I HAD NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
SO, WHY'D YOU COME TO ME...?
WAIT A MINUTE!
AWW, THERE'S LOTS OF OTHER PLACES YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME ALL THE WAY TO JAP --
WITH, ME...?
FELL IN LOVE...?
I'M NOT THE KINDA GUY GIRLS FALL IN LOVE WITH! I'VE GOT NO INTEREST IN GIRLS, FIRST OF ALL!
GET SERIOUS!
I KNOW.
STOP IT! BOOZE IS THE ONLY THING I LOVE IN THE WORLD!
I LOVE YOU, GOHONMATSU...


I'M NOT GOING TO
IF YOU KNOW, THEN GIVE UP ALREADY!
IF I HAVE TO, I'LL WAIT FOREVER.
DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME!
THAT WAS WHEN I WAS ZEPHYRUS..
WHAT ABOUT THE WHOLE ZEPHYRUS THING? ABOUT NOT LIKING MEN?
BUT I'M NOT ANYMORE -- NOW I'M MILDA!
MOTEL

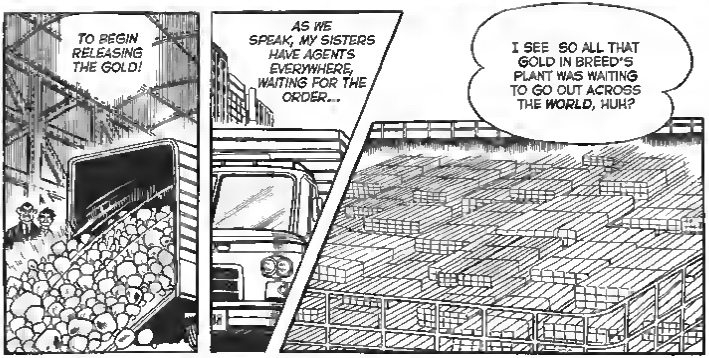

DA-DA-DUM-MM . LA-LA-LEEE...
DON'T MIND ME. I WANT TO STAY UP.
YOU SHOULD GO TO BED. THE NIGHT'S GETTIN' BREEZY!

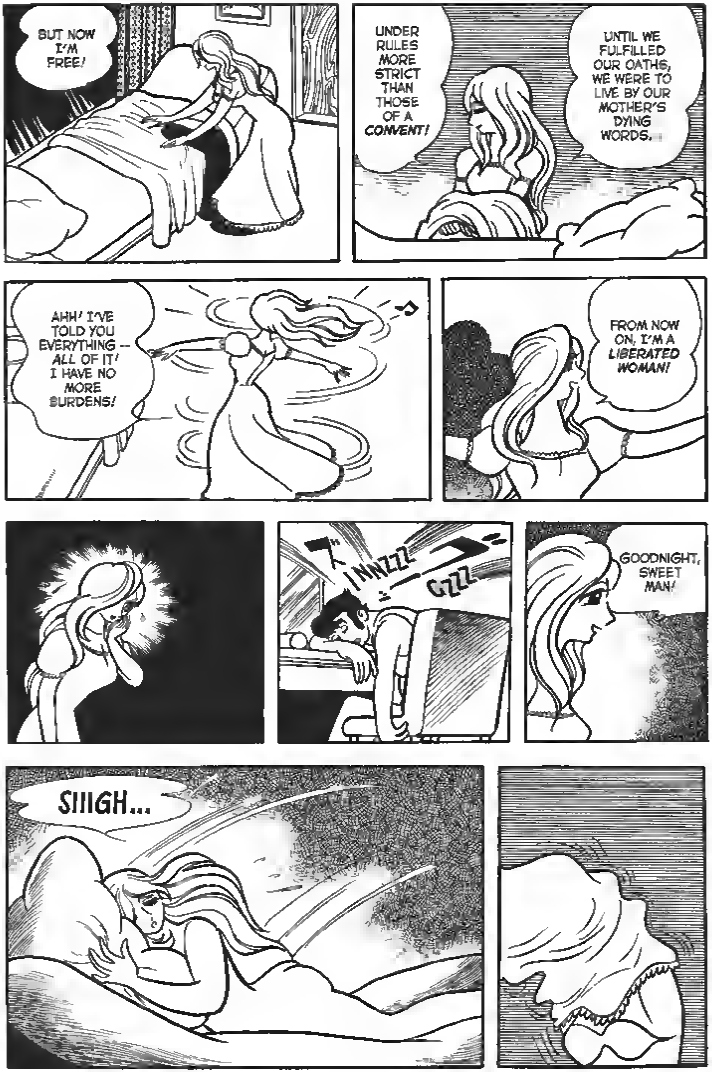
GO AHEAD.
I'M GONNA DRINK!
SURE, STAY UP...
IF HUMANITY LOST EVERYTHING... ALL THE WARS, AND GOVERNMENTS, AND COMPANIES AND SCHOOLS, AND SCIENCES, AND ARTS, AND RELIGIONS... WHAT DO YOU THINK THE WORLD WOULD BE LIKE?

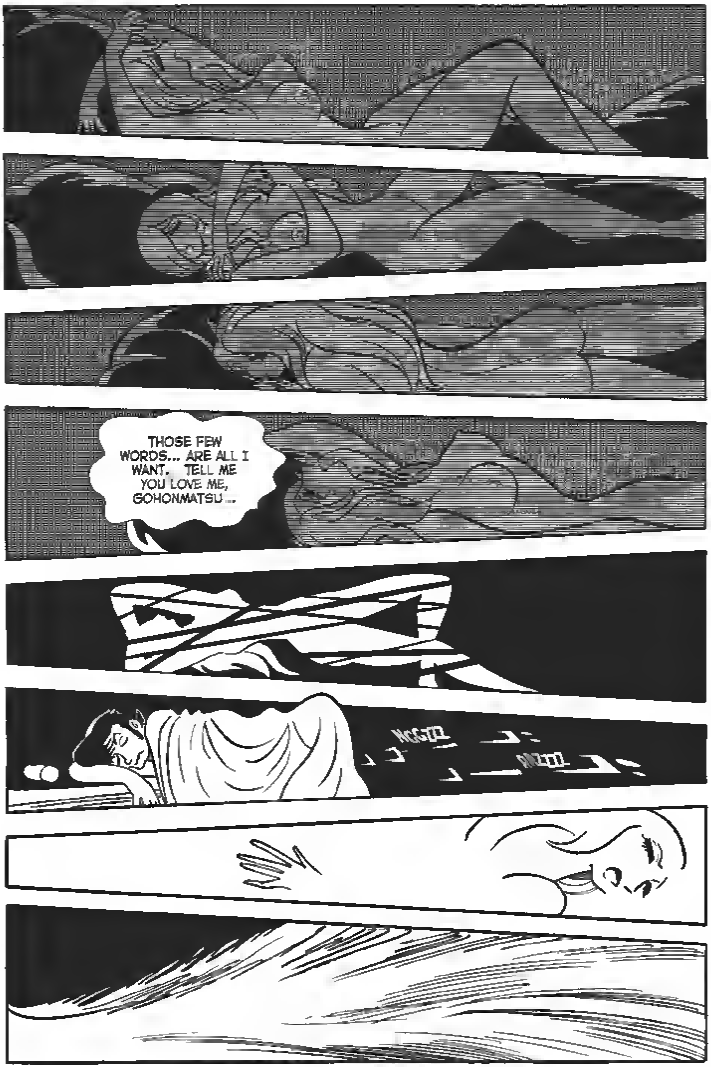
MY MOTHER MET A TERRIBLE FATE BECAUSE OF WAR AND MONEY, AND SHE DIED CURSING HUMANITY
BOY, THAT'S TOO HARD FOR ME TO GUESS...!
WHEN MY MOTHER DIED, SHE ENTRUSTED US WITH THREE FINAL OATHS.
OH, RIGHT! IN THE HOTEL, WHEN YOU WERE ZEPHYRUS, YOU KINDA MENTIONED IT...
DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT THIS BEFORE?
THE FACES OF TEN MILLION WOMEN WERE ENTERED INTO A COMPUTER, AND THE COMPOSITE WAS A BEAUTY THAT WOULD CHARM EVERY MAN ON EARTH TO THE POINT OF MADNESS!
GO-HON-MAT-SU...
OUR MASKS...
WERE MADE TO A SPECIFIC DESIGN
TO DESTROY MONEY...
TO MAKE CHAOS OF LAW AND MORALITY...
AND TO SEEK REVENGE ON MEN!

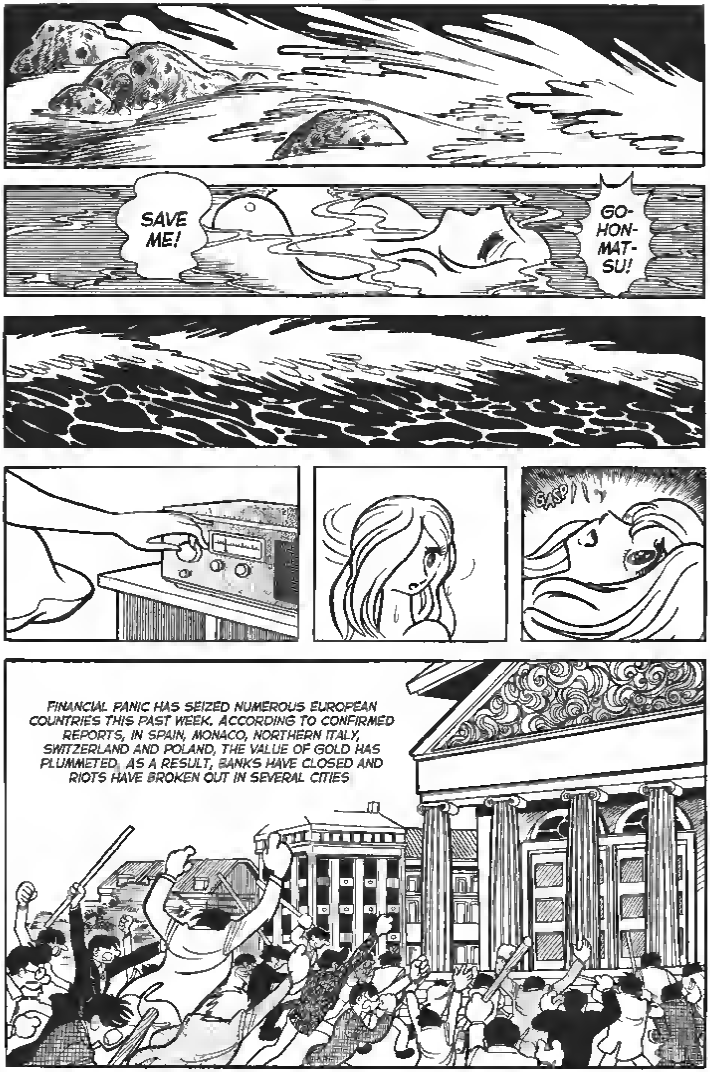

THEN, TO MAKE CHAOS OUT OF LAW, WE MARKETED SYNTHETIC SKIN AND MADE IT POPULAR THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO IDENTIFY CRIMINALS, LAW ENFORCEMENT COULD ONLY THROW UP ITS HANDS!

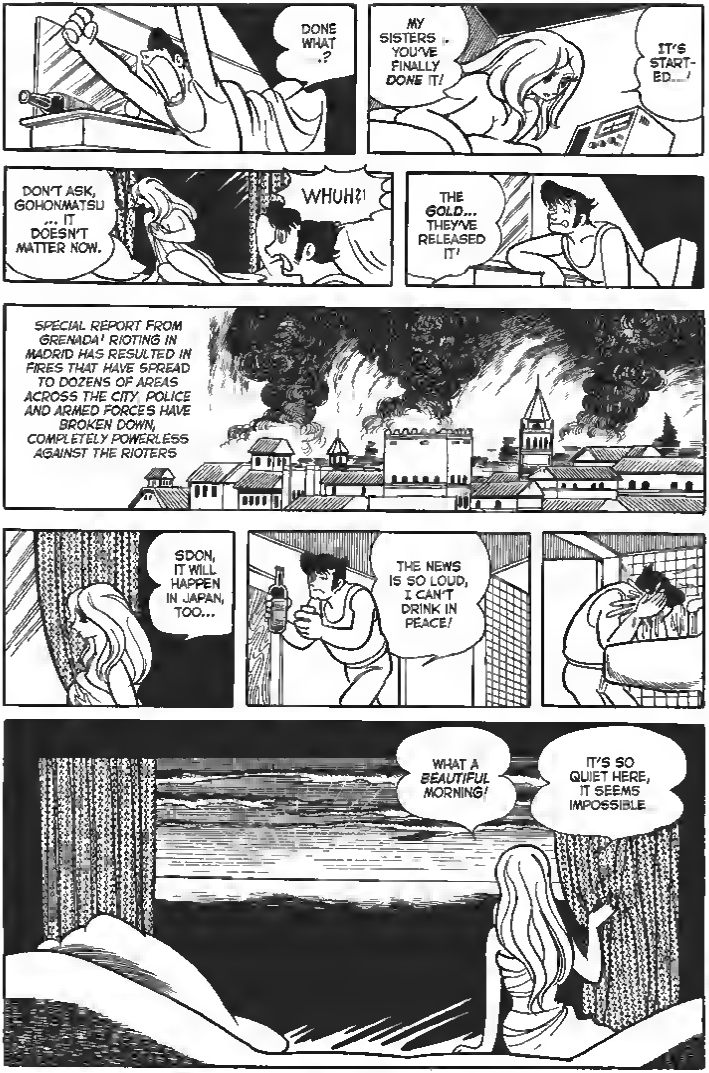
FINALLY, TO DESTROY THE POWER OF MONEY, WE ONLY HAD TO SPREAD GOLD FROM THE MAMOO EMPIRE AROUND THE WORLD... MAKING IT WORTHLESS AND CREATING PANIC!

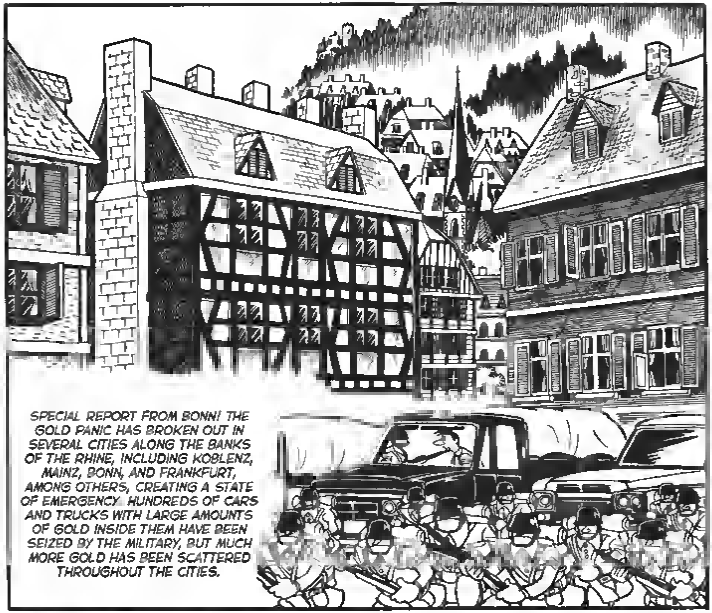

TO BEGIN RELEASING THE GOLD!
AS WE SPEAK, MY SISTERS HAVE AGENTS EVERYWHERE, WAITING FOR THE ORDER...
I SEE SO ALL THAT GOLD IN BREED'S PLANT WAS WAITING TO GO OUT ACROSS THE WORLD, HUH?

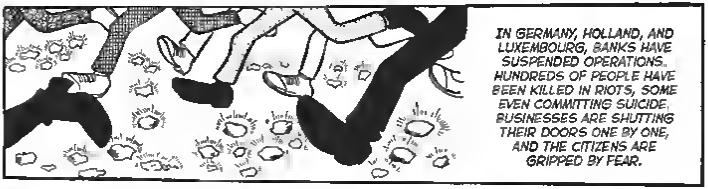

BUT NOW I'M FREE!
UNDER RULES MORE STRICT THAN THOSE OF A CONVENT!
UNTIL WE FULFILLED OUR OATHS, WE WERE TO LIVE BY OUR MOTHER'S DYING WORDS.
AHH! I'VE TOLD YOU EVERYTHING -- ALL OF IT! I HAVE NO MORE BURDENS!
FROM NOW ON, I'M A LIBERATED WOMAN!
NNZZZ
GZZZ
GOODNIGHT, SWEET MAN!
SIIIGH...

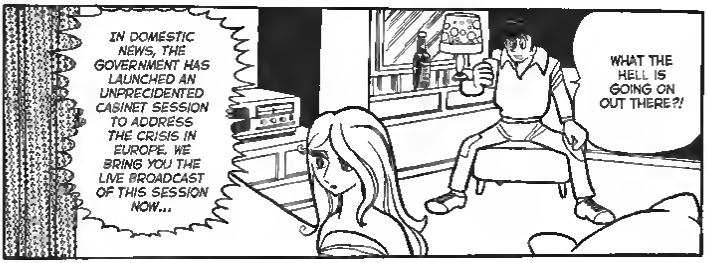

THOSE FEW WORDS... ARE ALL I WANT. TELL ME YOU LOVE ME, GOHONMATSU...

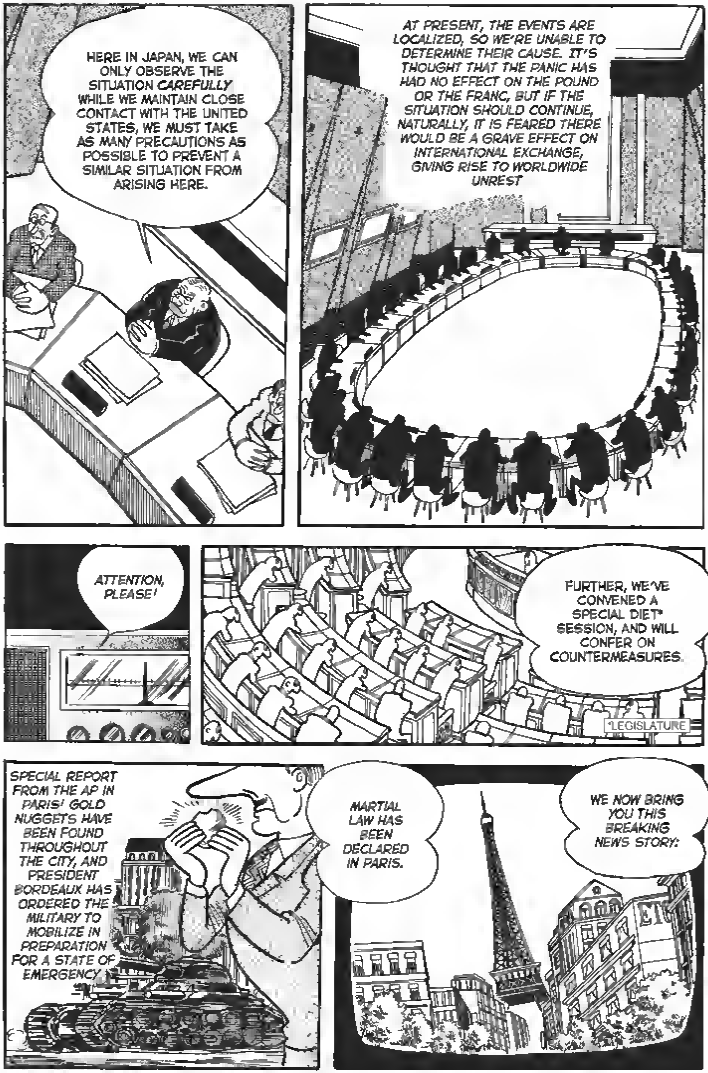

SAVE ME!
GO-HON-MAT-SU!
GASP!!
FINANCIAL PANIC HAS SEIZED NUMEROUS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THIS PAST WEEK. ACCORDING TO CONFIRMED REPORTS, IN SPAIN, MONACO, NORTHERN ITALY, SWITZERLAND AND POLAND, THE VALUE OF GOLD HAS PLUMMETED, AS A RESULT, BANKS HAVE CLOSED AND RIOTS HAVE BROKEN OUT IN SEVERAL CITIES

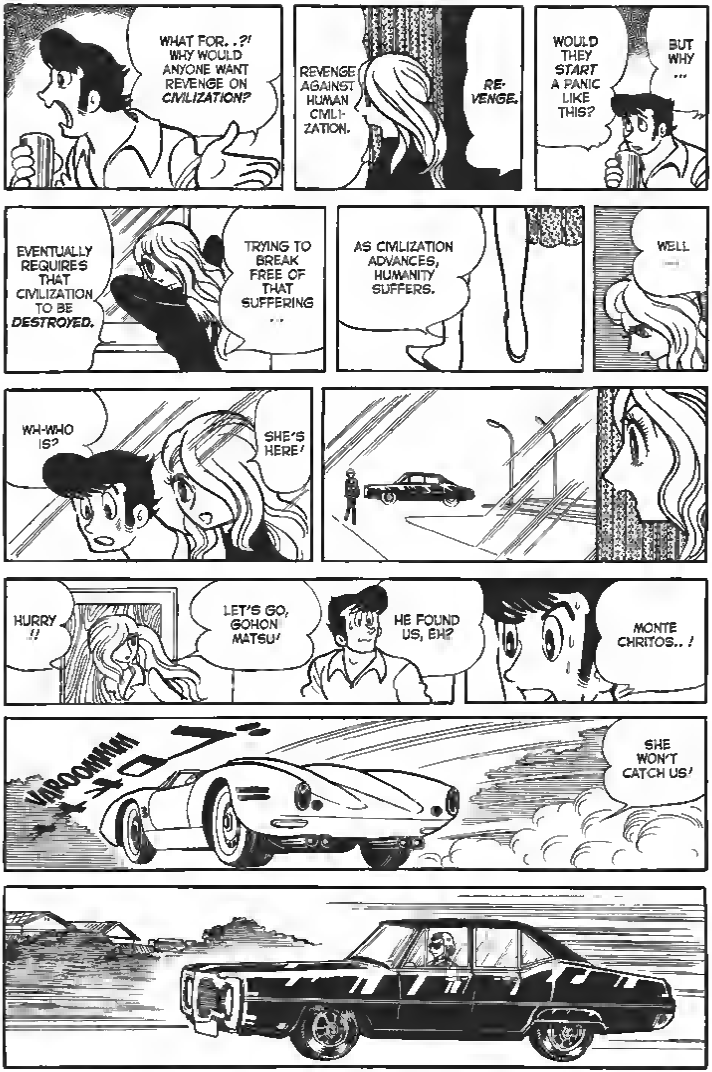

DONE WHAT .?
MY SISTERS .. YOU'VE FINALLY DONE IT!
IT'S START-ED.../
DON'T ASK, GOHONMATSU ... IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW.
WHUH?!
THE GOLD... THEY'VE RELEASED IT!
SPECIAL REPORT FROM GRENADA! RIOTING IN MADRID HAS RESULTED IN FIRES THAT HAVE SPREAD TO DOZENS OF AREAS ACROSS THE CITY. POLICE AND ARMED FORCES HAVE BROKEN DOWN, COMPLETELY POWERLESS AGAINST THE RIOTERS
SDON, IT WILL HAPPEN IN JAPAN, TOO...
THE NEWS IS SO LOUD, I CAN'T DRINK IN PEACE!
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING!
IT'S SO QUIET HERE, IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE

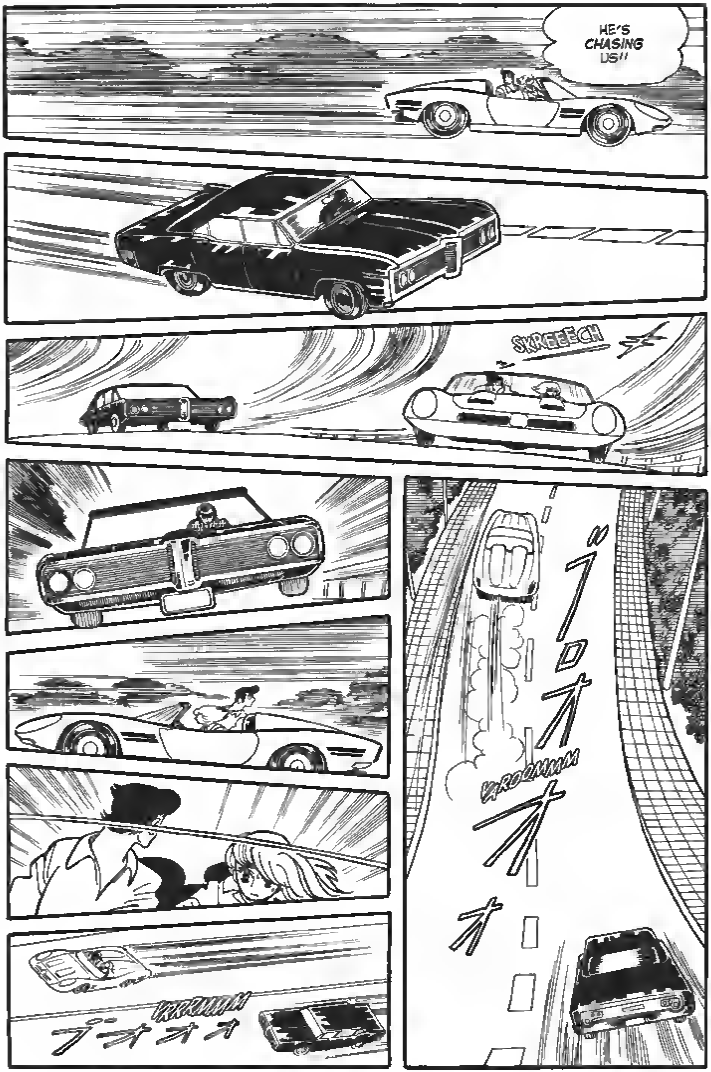

SPECIAL REPORT FROM BONN! THE GOLD PANIC HAS BROKEN OUT IN SEVERAL CITIES ALONG THE BANKS OF THE RHINE, INCLUDING KOBLENZ, MAINZ, BONN, AND FRANKFURT, AMONG OTHERS, CREATING A STATE OF EMERGENCY. HUNDREDS OF CARS AND TRUCKS WITH LARGE AMOUNTS OF GOLD INSIDE THEM HAVE BEEN SEIZED BY THE MILITARY, BUT MUCH MORE GOLD HAS BEEN SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE CITIES.

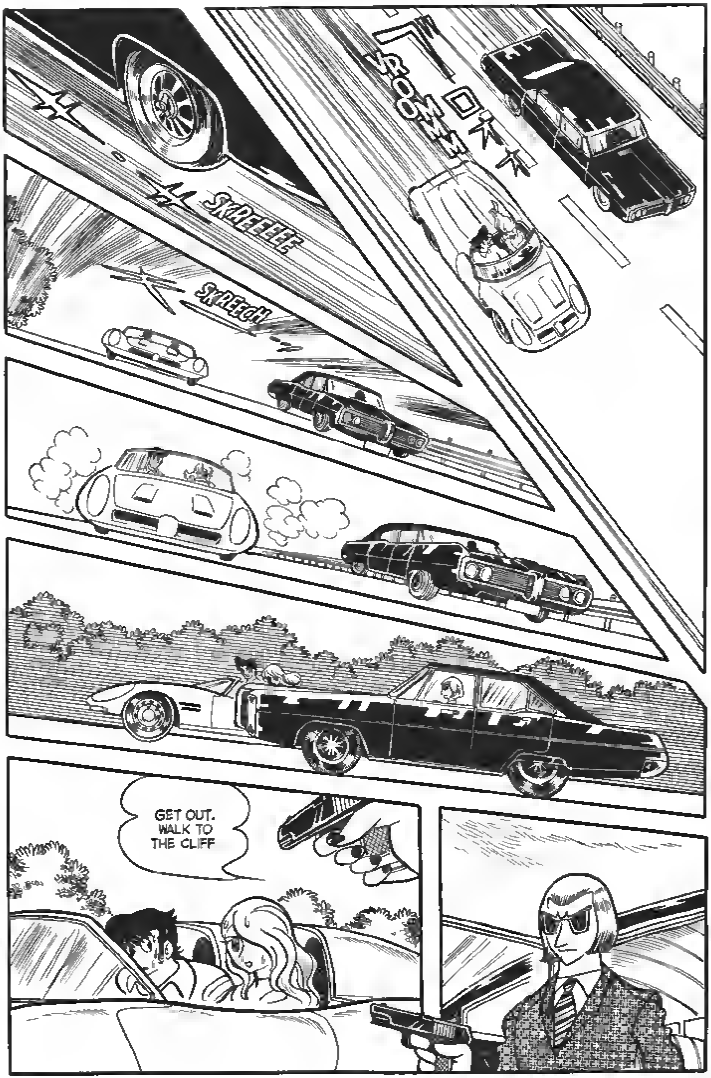

IN GERMANY, HOLLAND, AND LUXEMBOURG, BANKS HAVE SUSPENDED OPERATIONS. HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN RIOTS, SOME EVEN COMMITTING SUICIDE. BUSINESSES ARE SHUTTING THEIR DOORS ONE BY ONE, AND THE CITIZENS ARE GRIPPED BY FEAR.


IN DOMESTIC NEWS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS LAUNCHED AN UNPRECIDENTED CABINET SESSION TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS IN EUROPE. WE BRING YOU THE LIVE BROADCAST OF THIS SESSION NOW...
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OUT THERE?!

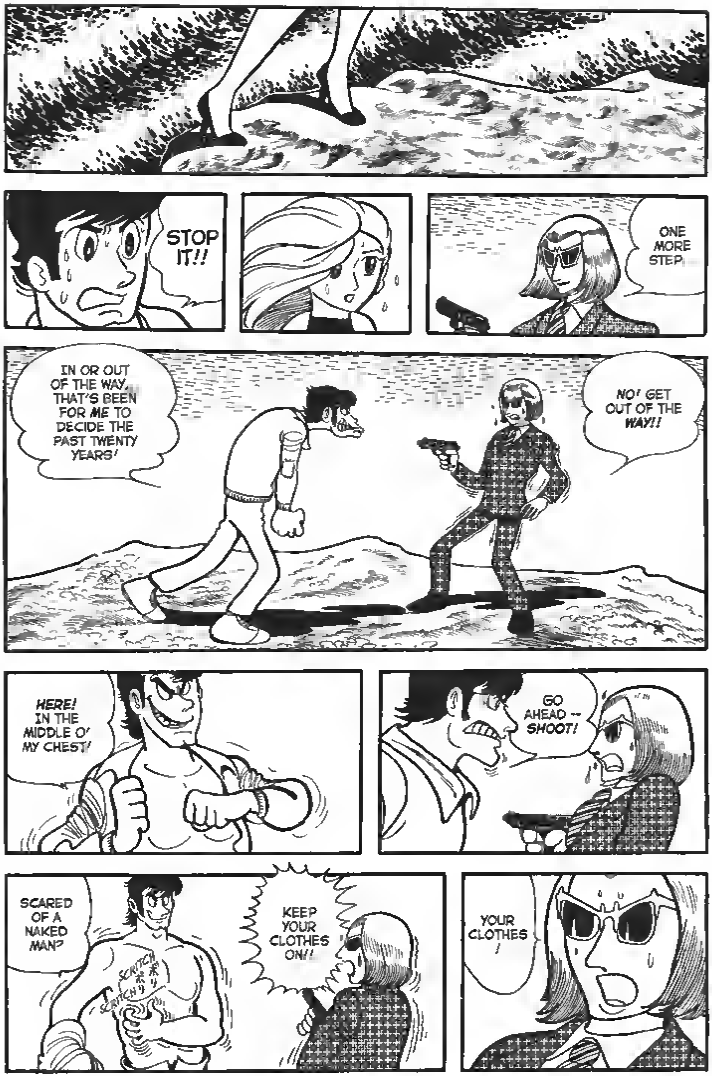

HERE IN JAPAN, WE CAN ONLY OBSERVE THE SITUATION CAREFULLY WHILE WE MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE UNITED STATES. WE MUST TAKE AS MANY PRECAUTIONS AS POSSIBLE TO PREVENT A SIMILAR SITUATION FROM ARISING HERE.
AT PRESENT, THE EVENTS ARE LOCALIZED, SO WE'RE UNABLE TO DETERMINE THEIR CAUSE. IT'S THOUGHT THAT THE PANIC HAS HAD NO EFFECT ON THE POUND OR THE FRANC, BUT IF THE SITUATION SHOULD CONTINUE, NATURALLY, IT IS FEARED THERE WOULD BE A GRAVE EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE, GIVING RISE TO WORLDWIDE UNREST
ATTENTION, PLEASE!
FURTHER, WE'VE CONVENED A SPECIAL DIET* SESSION, AND WILL CONFER ON COUNTERMEASURES.
*LEGISLATURE
SPECIAL REPORT FROM THE AP IN PARIS! GOLD NUGGETS HAVE BEEN FOUND THROUGHOUT THE CITY, AND PRESIDENT BORDEAUX HAS ORDERED THE MILITARY TO MOBILIZE IN PREPARATION FOR A STATE OF EMERGENCY
MARTIAL LAW HAS BEEN DECLARED IN PARIS.
WE NOW BRING YOU THIS BREAKING NEWS STORY:

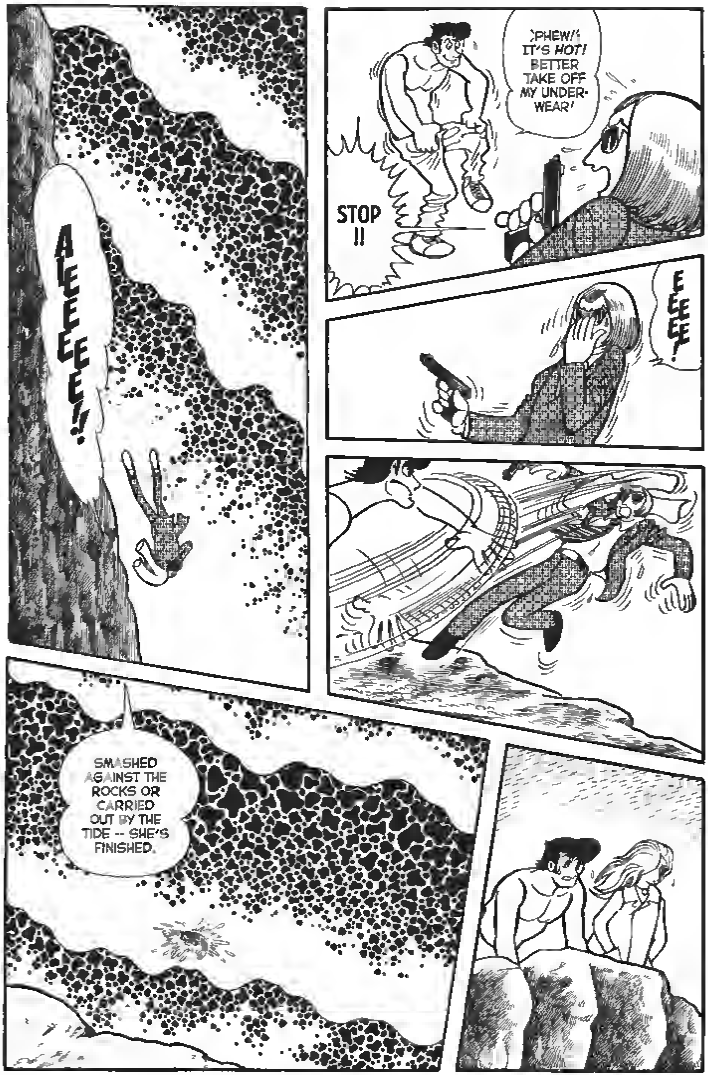

WHAT FOR..?! WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT REVENGE ON CIVILIZATION?
REVENGE AGAINST HUMAN CIVILIZATION.
RE-VENGE.
WOULD THEY START A PANIC LIKE THIS?
BUT WHY ...
EVENTUALLY REQUIRES THAT CIVILIZATION TO BE DESTROYED.
TRYING TO BREAK FREE OF THAT SUFFERING ..
AS CIVILIZATION ADVANCES, HUMANITY SUFFERS.
WELL ...
WH-WHO IS?
SHE'S HERE!
HURRY !!
LET'S GO, GOHON MATSU!
HE FOUND US, EH?
MONTE CHRITOS..!
VROOMMM
SHE WON'T CATCH US!

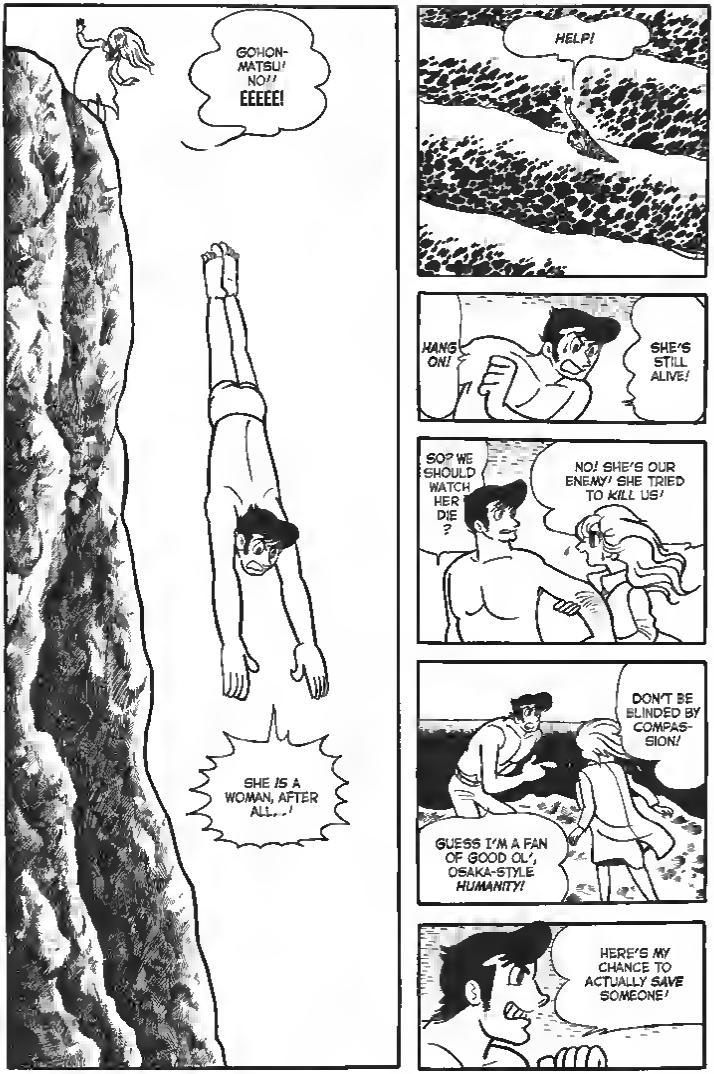

HE'S CHASING US!!
SKREEECH
ブロオオオオ
VROUMMM
ブオオオ
VROUMM


SHOOT
SKREEEEE
SKREECH!
GET OUT. WALK TO THE CLIFF

OH, REALLY? WHAT *FITTING* LOGIC. . BUT IN THE END, YOU SIMPLY WANT TO STEAL GOHONMATSU FROM ME, DON'T YOU? YOU *ARE* A WOMAN, AFTER ALL!
BY BETRAYING ZEPHYRUS, YOU HAVE BETRAYED *ME* AS WELL, MILDA. THEREFORE, YOU MUST DIE
HA...HA HA HA HA HA THINK YOU'VE GOT *ME*, MISS CHRITOS?
LIAR!!
SO -- YOU SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS! GOHONMATSU LOVES ME! WE'RE PLANNING TO GET *MARRIED* SOON!
SAY WHAT YOU WILL, BUT AS LONG AS GOHONMATSU REMAINS WITH *YOU*, HE'LL BE A TARGET FOR ZEPHYRUS' REVENGE
YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE!

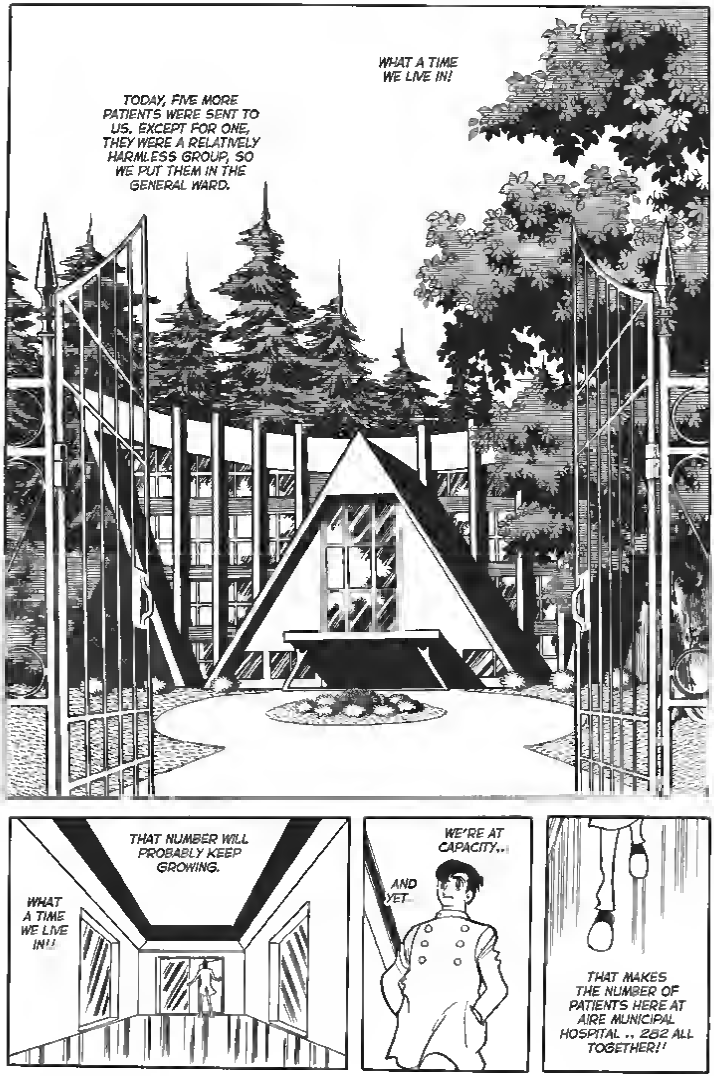

STOP IT!!
ONE MORE STEP.
IN OR OUT OF THE WAY, THAT'S BEEN FOR ME TO DECIDE THE PAST TWENTY YEARS!
NO! GET OUT OF THE WAY!!
HERE! IN THE MIDDLE O' MY CHEST!
GO AHEAD -- SHOOT!
SCARED OF A NAKED MAN?
SCRATCH SCRATCH
KEEP YOUR CLOTHES ON!
YOUR CLOTHES!

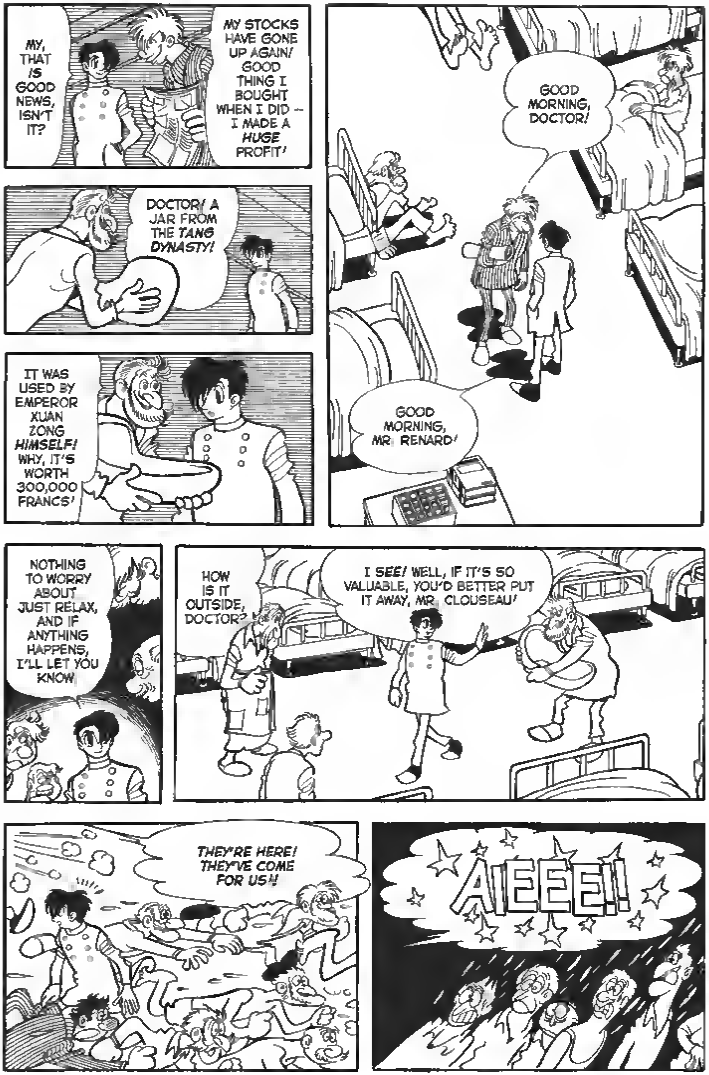

AEEEEEE!!
STOP !!
PHEW!! IT'S HOT! BETTER TAKE OFF MY UNDER-WEAR!
EEEE!
SMASHED AGAINST THE ROCKS OR CARRIED OUT BY THE TIDE -- SHE'S FINISHED.


GOHON-MATSU! NO!! EEEEE!
SHE *IS* A WOMAN, AFTER ALL...!
HELP!
HANG ON!
SHE'S STILL ALIVE!
SO? WE SHOULD WATCH HER DIE?
NO! SHE'S OUR ENEMY! SHE TRIED TO *KILL* US!
DON'T BE BLINDED BY COMPAS-SION!
GUESS I'M A FAN OF GOOD OL', OSAKA-STYLE *HUMANITY!*
HERE'S *MY* CHANCE TO ACTUALLY *SAVE* SOMEONE!

CHAPTER 17

# MENUETTO

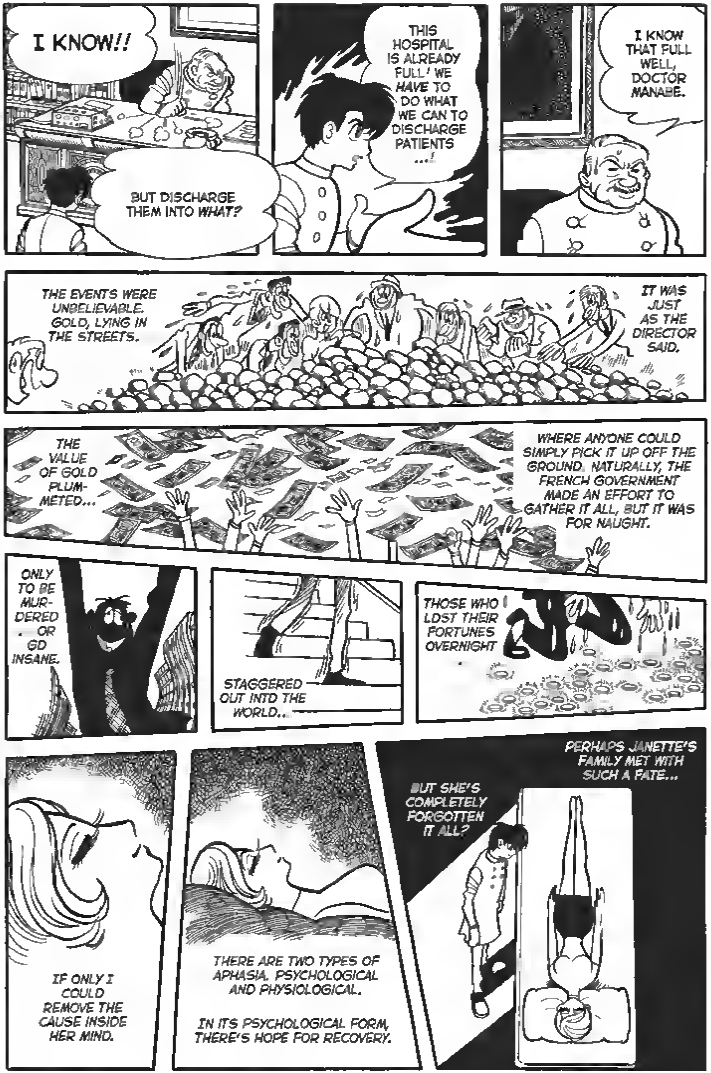

WHAT A TIME WE LIVE IN!
TODAY, FIVE MORE PATIENTS WERE SENT TO US. EXCEPT FOR ONE, THEY WERE A RELATIVELY HARMLESS GROUP, SO WE PUT THEM IN THE GENERAL WARD.
THAT NUMBER WILL PROBABLY KEEP GROWING.
WHAT A TIME WE LIVE IN!!
WE'RE AT CAPACITY...
AND YET...
THAT MAKES THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS HERE AT AIRE MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL .. 282 ALL TOGETHER!!


MY, THAT IS GOOD NEWS, ISN'T IT?
MY STOCKS HAVE GONE UP AGAIN! GOOD THING I BOUGHT WHEN I DID -- I MADE A HUGE PROFIT!
DOCTOR! A JAR FROM THE TANG DYNASTY!
IT WAS USED BY EMPEROR XUAN ZONG HIMSELF! WHY, IT'S WORTH 300,000 FRANCS!
GOOD MORNING, DOCTOR!
GOOD MORNING, MR. RENARD!
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. JUST RELAX, AND IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
HOW IS IT OUTSIDE, DOCTOR?
I SEE! WELL, IF IT'S SO VALUABLE, YOU'D BETTER PUT IT AWAY, MR. CLOUSEAU!
THEY'RE HERE! THEY'VE COME FOR US!!
AIEEE!!

IT'S OKAY... GO BACK TO BED AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
I'VE GOT MY RIFLE!!
THEY'RE OUT THERE... THE PEASANTS! THEY'VE COME FOR ME! LISTEN! CAN'T YOU HEAR THEM?! THEY WON'T GET ME!!
NO ONE'S COMING! CALM DOWN!!
WHEW!
GOOD MORNING, JANETTE. HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

JANETTE VALOUNE SHE'S BEEN HERE FOUR MONTHS -- THE ONLY FEMALE PATIENT IN MY CHARGE. HER ILLNESS IS CALLED MNEMONIC APHASIA... SHE'S FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING, EVEN HOW TO SPEAK
LET'S PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF YESTERDAY WHAT'S THIS?
PLEASE... SIT.
A... PP... LE, COME ON!!
COME ON!!
AP- PLE. TRY SAYING IT.
AN APPLE.
I CAN UNDERSTAND FORGETTING THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER... BUT WORDS... YOU WANT TO SPEAK, DON'T YOU?
WE'LL TRY AGAIN LATER
THAT'S OKAY, JANETTE!!
AUGH...!

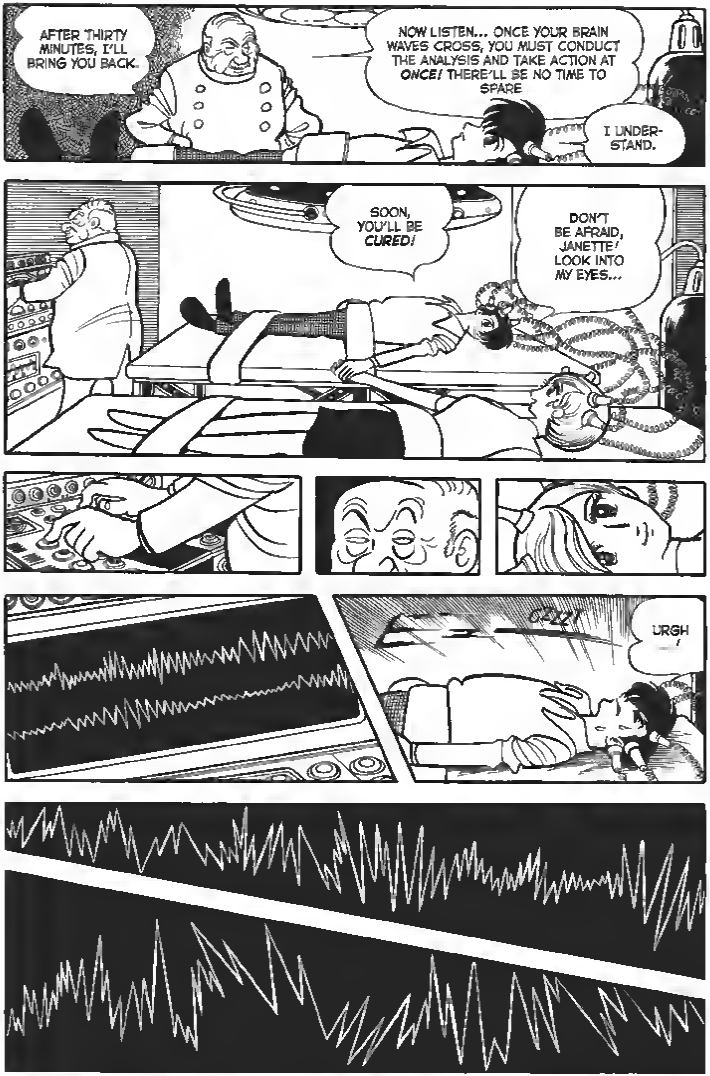
I'LL COME BACK, OKAY?
I FEEL LIKE I CAN SEE A FLICKER OF TRUST AND KINDNESS IN JANETTE'S EMPTY GAZE
STARTING HERE IN FRANCE, THEN IN GERMANY, ITALY, SPAIN, ENGLAND, AND EASTERN EUROPE!! SOON, IT WILL HAPPEN, TOO, IN YOUR HOMELAND OF JAPAN, DOCTOR MANABE...
PERHAPS IT'S BETTER TO REMAIN THE WAY THEY ARE...? OUT THERE, REALITY IS CHAOS ERUPTING EVERYWHERE...
ALL BECAUSE OF THE GOLD PANIC.
HAVE GONE MAD OR KILLED THEMSELVES? THE REALITY IS THAT GOLD FLOWS ACROSS THE WORLD, AND THE GLOBAL CURRENCIES HAVE BECOME DRAMATICALLY UNSTABLE.
NOW MANY TENS OF THOUSANDS — NO, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS...
EVEN RESTORED TO SANITY, IF WE WERE TO RELEASE THEM BACK OUT INTO THAT, THEY'D GO MAD AGAIN ANYWAY.
OUR PATIENTS HERE ARE THE VICTIMS OF IT.
BUT THAT MAKES THIS NOTHING BUT AN INTERNMENT CAMP! AS DOCTORS, ISN'T IT OUR DUTY TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO CURE THEM?!
IT'S BETTER FOR THEM.. JUST TO BE AS THEY ARE

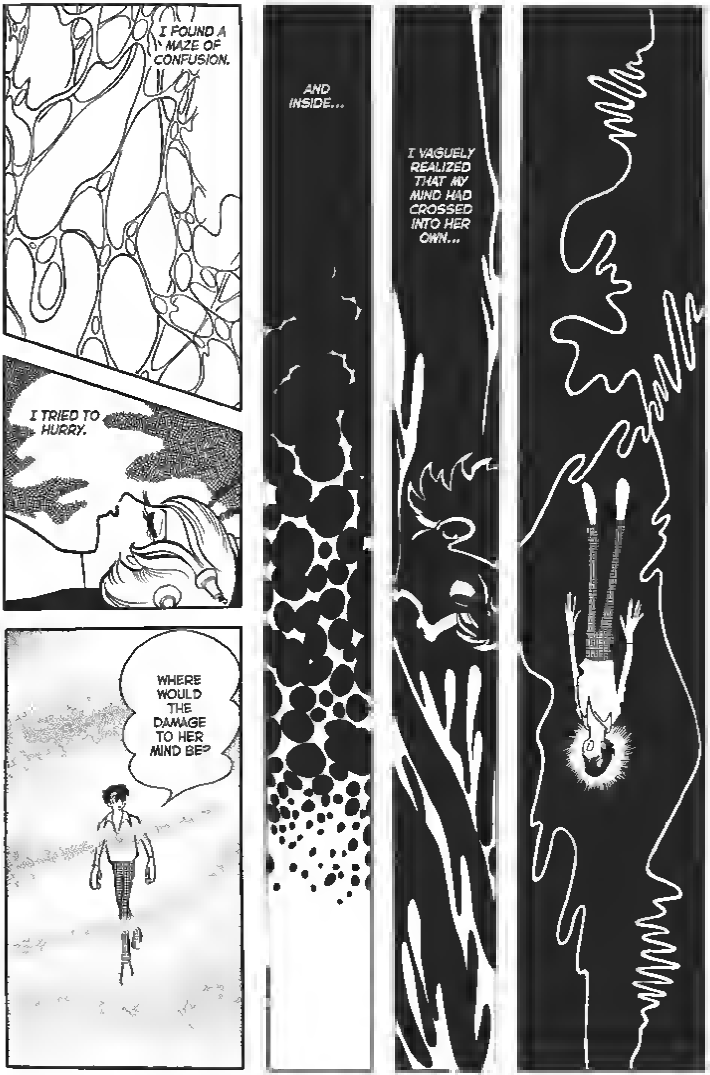

I KNOW!!
BUT DISCHARGE THEM INTO WHAT?
THIS HOSPITAL IS ALREADY FULL! WE HAVE TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO DISCHARGE PATIENTS ...!
I KNOW THAT FULL WELL, DOCTOR MANABE.
THE EVENTS WERE UNBELIEVABLE. GOLD, LYING IN THE STREETS.
IT WAS JUST AS THE DIRECTOR SAID.
THE VALUE OF GOLD PLUMMETED...
WHERE ANYONE COULD SIMPLY PICK IT UP OFF THE GROUND. NATURALLY, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT MADE AN EFFORT TO GATHER IT ALL, BUT IT WAS FOR NAUGHT.
ONLY TO BE MURDERED . OR GO INSANE.
STAGGERED OUT INTO THE WORLD..
THOSE WHO LOST THEIR FORTUNES OVERNIGHT
IF ONLY I COULD REMOVE THE CAUSE INSIDE HER MIND.
THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF APHASIA, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL.
IN ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL FORM, THERE'S HOPE FOR RECOVERY.
BUT SHE'S COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN IT ALL?
PERHAPS JANETTE'S FAMILY MET WITH SUCH A FATE...

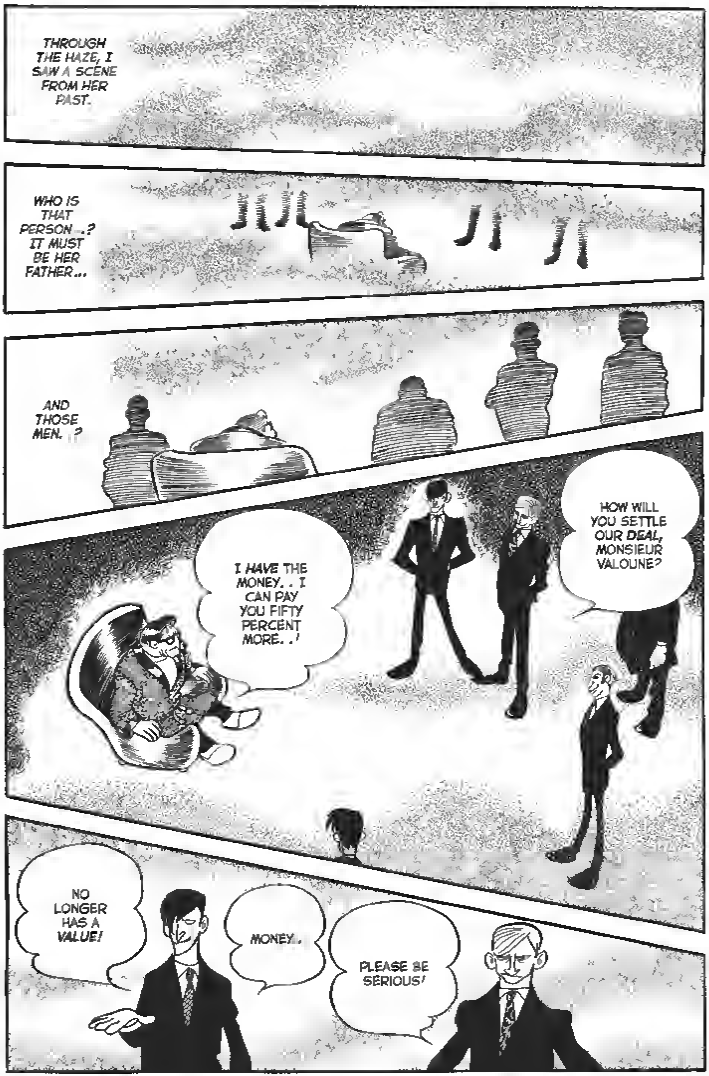
I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER
BE-CAUSE
SOMEHOW, I MUST FIND A WAY TO CURE HER.
DOCTOR, IS IT ALL RIGHT IF WE HAVE AN EASTER CELEBRATION?
LAST EASTER. . . I REALIZED HOW I FELT.
THEY'RE SO CAREFREE, AREN'T THEY, DOCTOR?
THE SOCIAL CLUB HAS ELECTED OUR MISS EASTER!
LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN!!

IN MY HEART
SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL — SO PURE AND FULL OF LOVE.
AND NOW, THE EASTER BOUQUET!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE!
I KNEW SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE FOR ME.
BUT HOW...?
WHATEVER HAPPENS, I MUST CURE HER!
YOU SEEK HER CURE THAT BADLY, DOCTOR MANABE?
BUT IT'S AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS METHOD! IF YOU FAIL, THERE'S NO TURNING BACK!
IF A QUICK RECOVERY IS WHAT YOU'RE AFTER, THERE MAY BE ONE WAY..
BUT HER TREATMENT REQUIRES GREAT PERSEVERENCE
I UNDERSTAND..

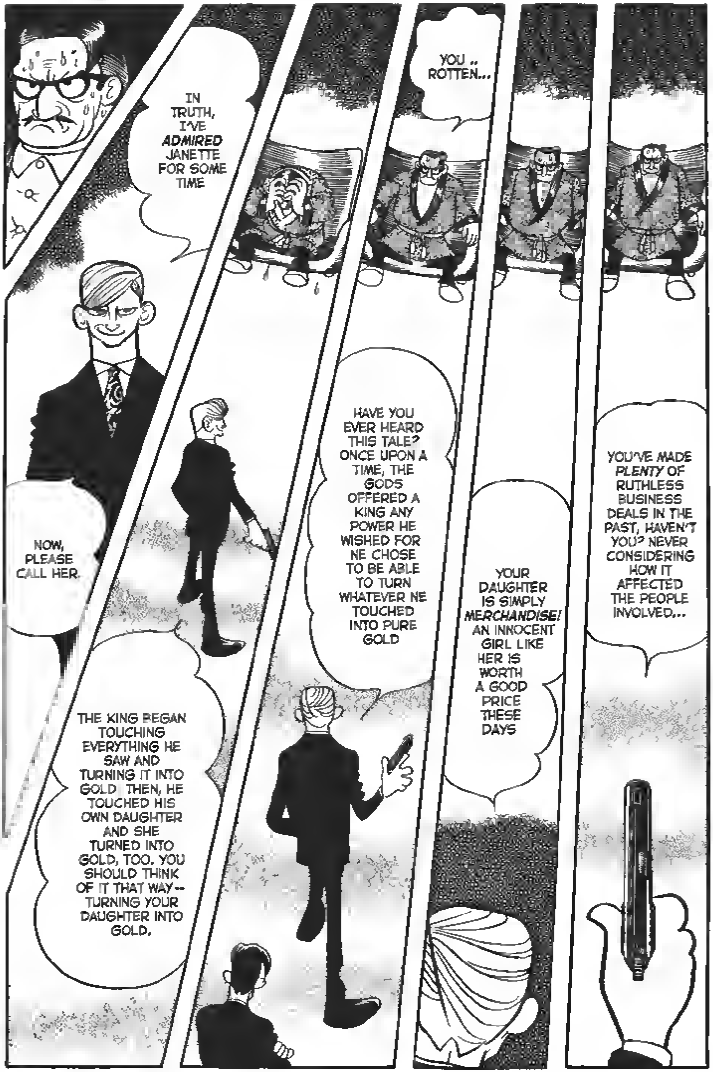
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?!
IT INVOLVES *MERGING* YOURSELF WITH THE SUBJECT'S DEEP SUBCONSCIOUS
THE TECHNIQUE WAS DEVELOPED BY PROFESSOR OTTO HOFFBERG DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR. GERMAN SECRET INTELLIGENCE USED IT TO PSYCHOANALYZE SPIES, BUT IT HASN'T BEEN USED MUCH SINCE.
IN OTHER WORDS, *YOU* BECOME *HER*.
YOUR BRAIN WAVES ARE *CROSSED* WITH THE SUBJECT'S...
DOING SO, YOU CAN USE YOUR EXPERTISE TO SEEK OUT THE SCAR ON HER PSYCHE AND REPAIR IT. THE REST IS UP TO YOU.
WILL YOU ATTEMPT IT?
BUT IF SOMETHING SHOULD GO WRONG, IT COULD BE THE END FOR *BOTH* OF YOU.
YES!

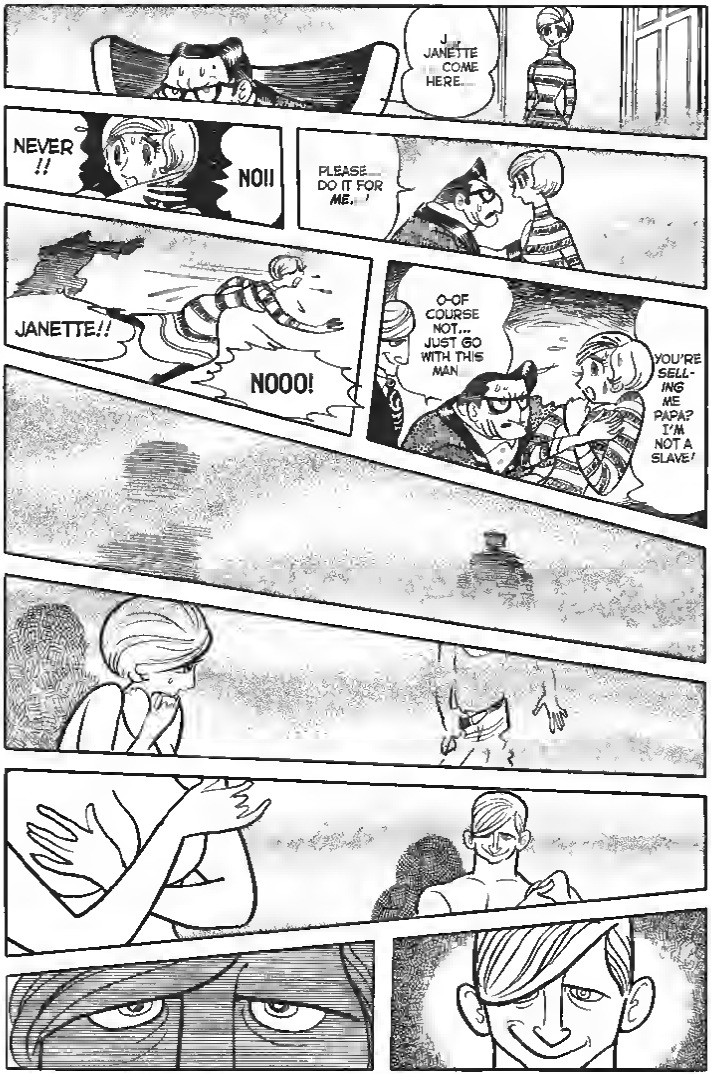

AFTER THIRTY MINUTES, I'LL BRING YOU BACK.
NOW LISTEN... ONCE YOUR BRAIN WAVES CROSS, YOU MUST CONDUCT THE ANALYSIS AND TAKE ACTION AT *ONCE!* THERE'LL BE NO TIME TO SPARE
I UNDERSTAND.
SOON, YOU'LL BE *CURED!*
DON'T BE AFRAID, JANETTE! LOOK INTO MY EYES...
GAZE
URGH

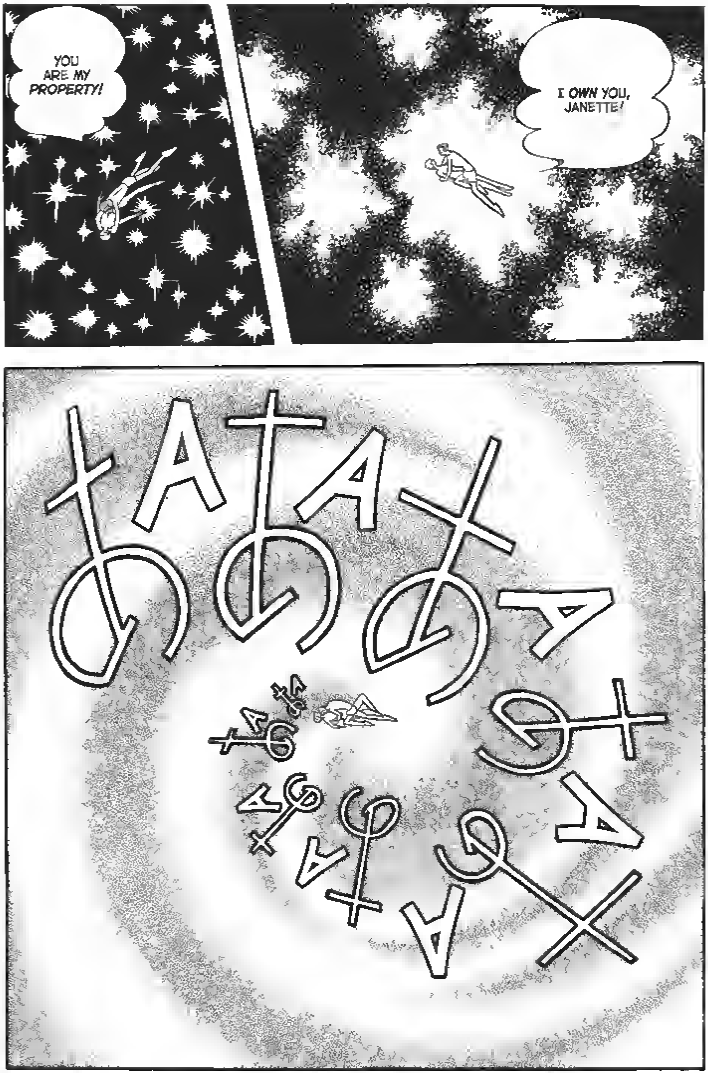

I FOUND A MAZE OF CONFUSION.
I TRIED TO HURRY.
WHERE WOULD THE DAMAGE TO HER MIND BE?
AND INSIDE...
I VAGUELY REALIZED THAT MY MIND HAD CROSSED INTO HER OWN...

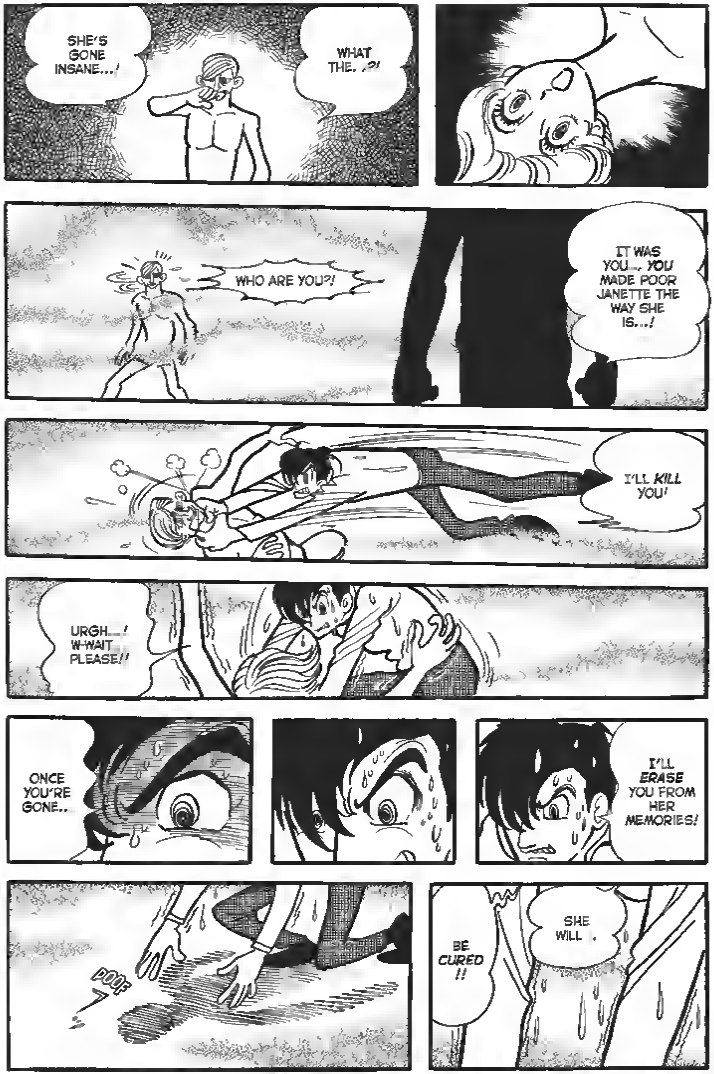

THROUGH THE HAZE, I SAW A SCENE FROM HER PAST.
WHO IS THAT PERSON..? IT MUST BE HER FATHER...
AND THOSE MEN..?
I HAVE THE MONEY.. I CAN PAY YOU FIFTY PERCENT MORE..!
HOW WILL YOU SETTLE OUR DEAL, MONSIEUR VALOUNE?
NO LONGER HAS A VALUE!
MONEY..
PLEASE BE SERIOUS!

THAT IS NO EXCUSE! WE STILL HAVE BUSINESS TO SETTLE.
THIS UNAVOIDABLE DISASTER!
I NEVER ANCTICI-PATED...
SOMETHING INSTEAD OF MONEY SINCE IT HAS NO VALUE, WE'LL BARTER -- THAT SEEMS THE REASONABLE THING TO DO.
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?!
YES -- I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING!
ANY-THING ?
TAKE ANYTHING YOU WANT, THEN!
I'D SAY SHE MUST BE WORTH 500,000.
JANETTE ?! I CAN'T DO THAT!
WHAT ?!
BY YOUR OWN WORDS -- I'LL TAKE YOUR DAUGHTER.
VERY WELL.
THAT'S THE DEAL!
LET GO, MONSIEUR VALOUNE!
WHY, YOU...! YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST BUY MY DAUGHTER LIKE SOME OBJECT ? N-NEVER!!


NOW, PLEASE CALL HER.
IN TRUTH, I'VE *ADMIRED* JANETTE FOR SOME TIME
THE KING BEGAN TOUCHING EVERYTHING HE SAW AND TURNING IT INTO GOLD. THEN, HE TOUCHED HIS OWN DAUGHTER AND SHE TURNED INTO GOLD, TOO. YOU SHOULD THINK OF IT THAT WAY-- TURNING YOUR DAUGHTER INTO GOLD.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THIS TALE? ONCE UPON A TIME, THE GODS OFFERED A KING ANY POWER HE WISHED FOR. HE CHOSE TO BE ABLE TO TURN WHATEVER HE TOUCHED INTO PURE GOLD
YOU .. ROTTEN...
YOUR DAUGHTER IS SIMPLY *MERCHANDISE!* AN INNOCENT GIRL LIKE HER IS WORTH A GOOD PRICE THESE DAYS
YOU'VE MADE *PLENTY* OF RUTHLESS BUSINESS DEALS IN THE PAST, HAVEN'T YOU? NEVER CONSIDERING HOW IT AFFECTED THE PEOPLE INVOLVED...


JANETTE COME HERE...
NEVER !!
NO!!
PLEASE... DO IT FOR ME...
JANETTE!!
NOOO!
O-OF COURSE NOT... JUST GO WITH THIS MAN
YOU'RE SELLING ME PAPA? I'M NOT A SLAVE!


YOU ARE MY PROPERTY!
I OWN YOU, JANETTE!

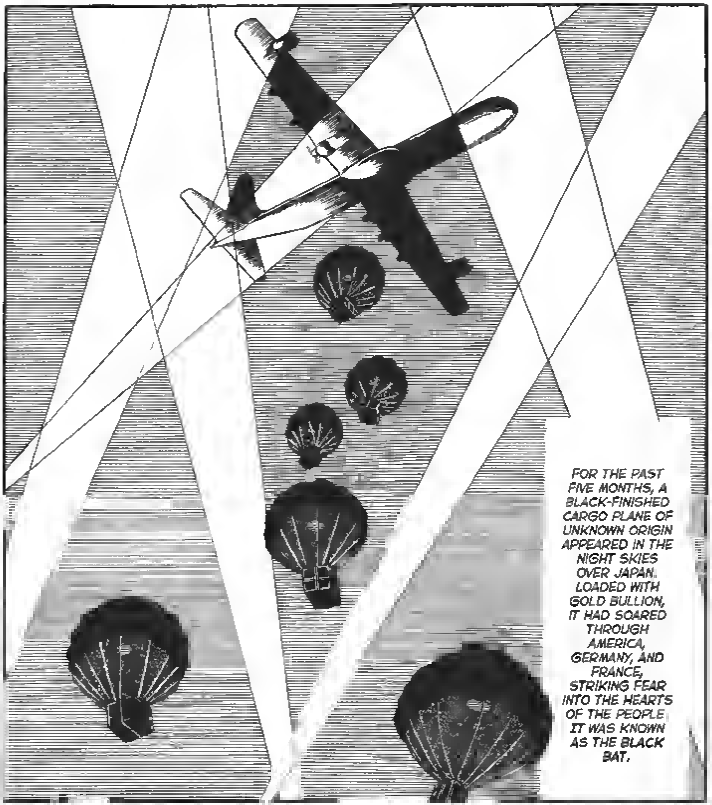

SHE'S GONE INSANE...!
WHAT THE..?!
WHO ARE YOU?!
IT WAS YOU... YOU MADE POOR JANETTE THE WAY SHE IS...!
I'LL KILL YOU!
URGH...! W-WAIT PLEASE!!
ONCE YOU'RE GONE..
I'LL ERASE YOU FROM HER MEMORIES!
DOOF
BE CURED !!
SHE WILL .

EEEEE!!
JANETTE... YOUR VOICE HAS RETURNED!!
..
YOUR MEMORY HAS BEEN RESTORED ...
DO YOU RECOG-NIZE ME?
I'M THE HOSPITAL DIRECTOR!
COOH!
AAAH!
JANETTE -- WAIT!!
LOOK OUT!!

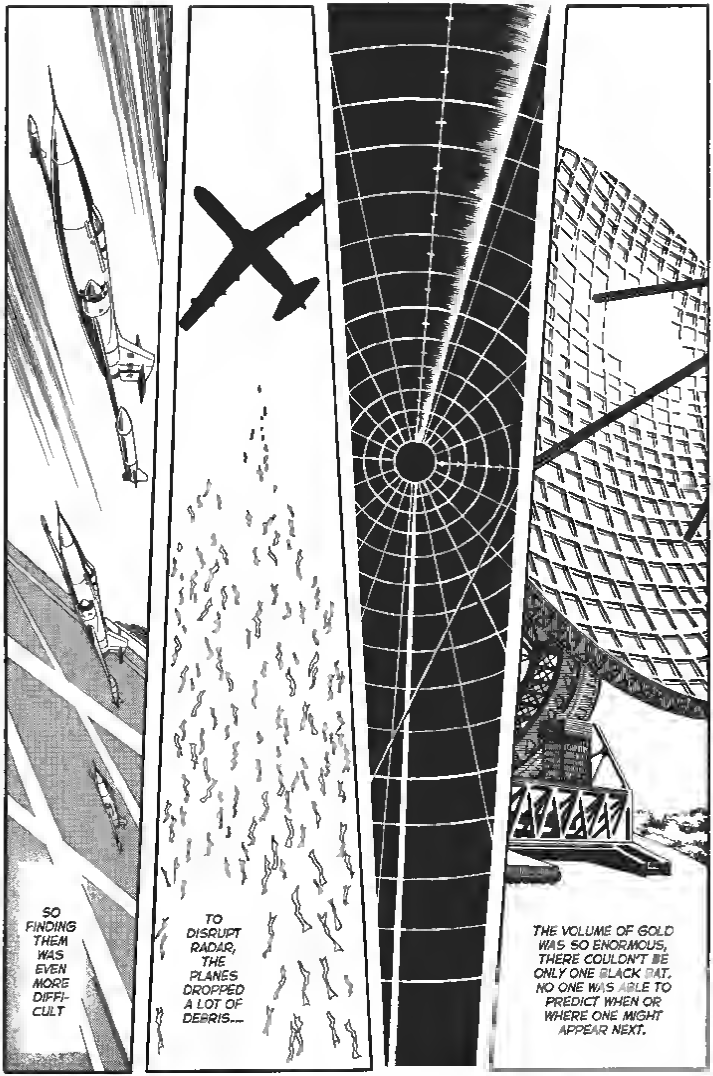
PA... PA... PLEASE, DON'T... SELL ME... PLEASE --
STAY WITH ME, JANETTE!
JANETTE!!
THE MOMENT HER MEMORY RETURNED, THE TERRIBLE EVENTS OF HER PAST MUST HAVE DRIVEN HER TO DESPAIR!
THE POOR GIRL ...
SHE'S DEAD!
SLUMP
ガ
INSIDE ME! DURING THE HOFFBERG TREATMENT, OUR MINDS BECAME ONE NOW SHE'S WITH ME!
JANETTE WAS DEAD, OR SO THEY THOUGHT... BUT I KNEW THE TRUTH, THE ONE WHO DIED WAS THE OLD JANETTE.
THEY'VE LOCKED ME UP IN THE HOSPITAL'S PSYCHIATRIC WARD... THEY SAY I'M INSANE! HOW CAN THAT BE WHEN I'M SO HAPPY..?
SO, IN A WAY... WE'RE MARRIED
THE BEST THING FOR HER WAS TO ELIMINATE THE PAST, SO THE HAPPY JANETTE OF THE PRESENT COULD LIVE ON...

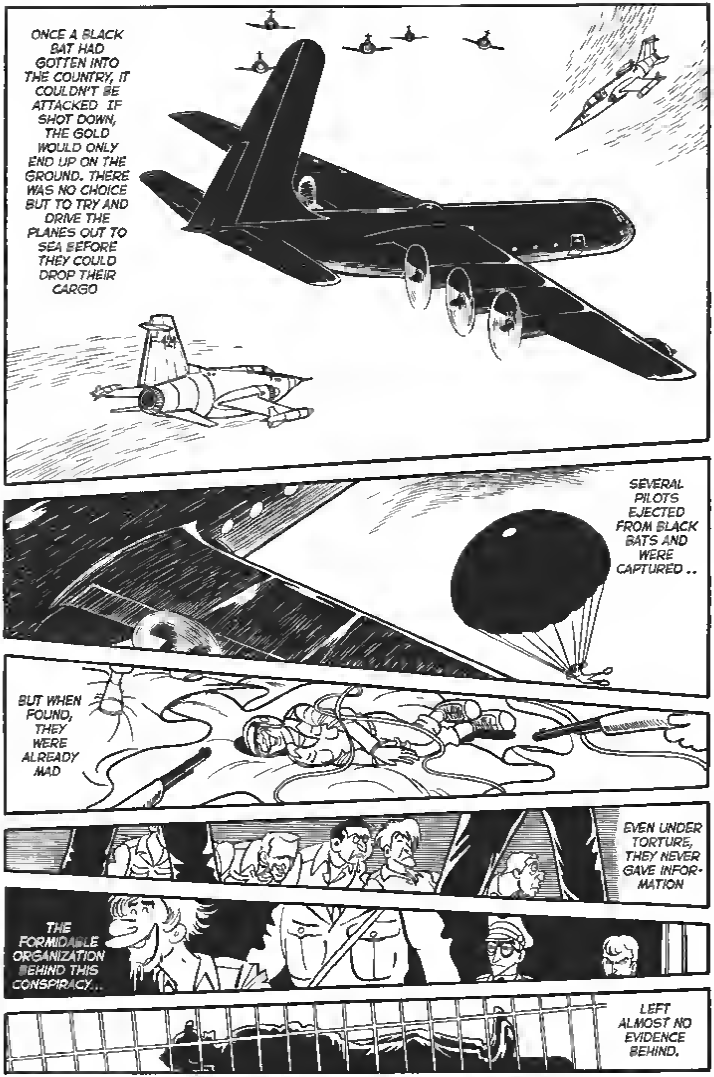
CHAPTER 18

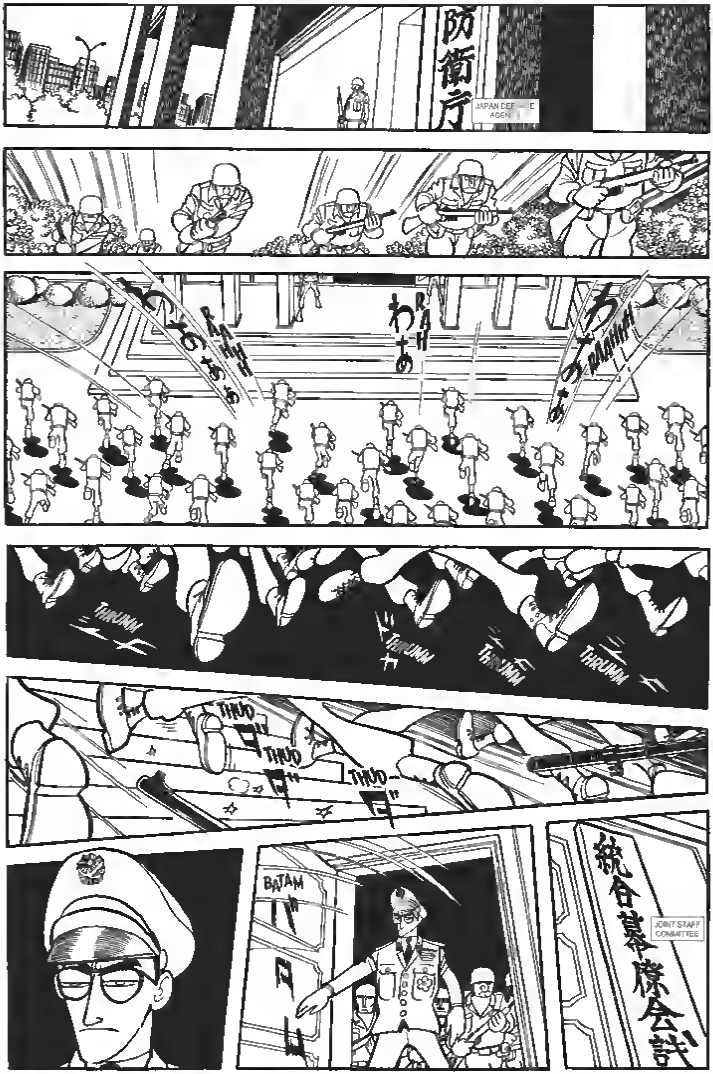
# POLONAISE MELANCHOLIQUE

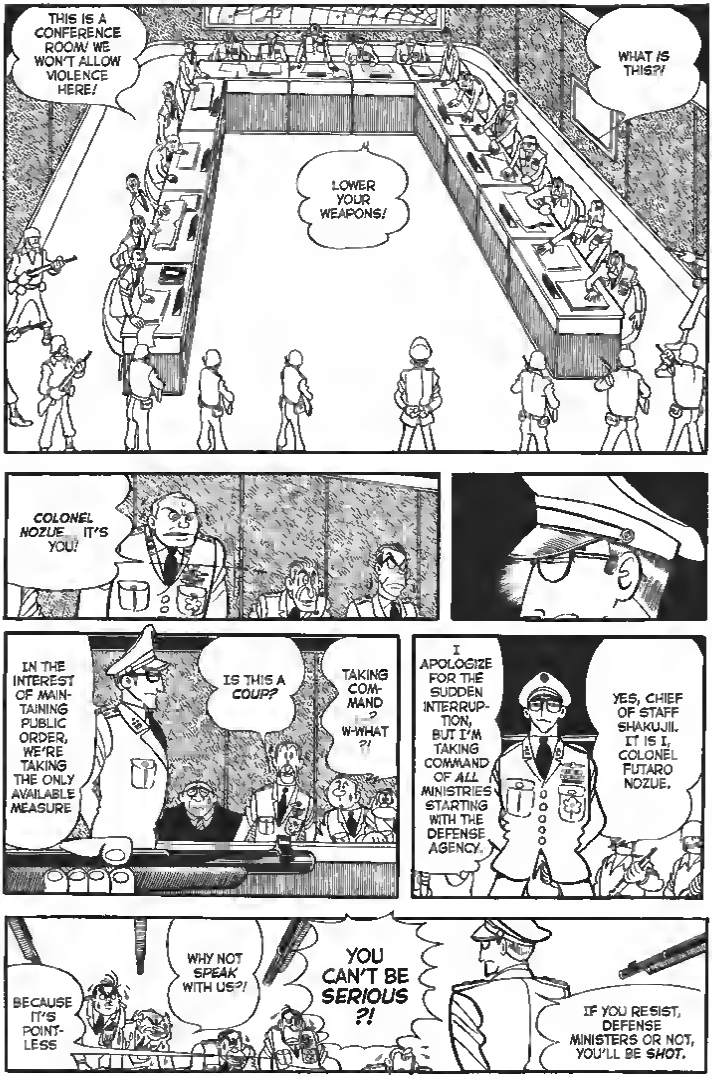

FOR THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, A BLACK-FINISHED CARGO PLANE OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN APPEARED IN THE NIGHT SKIES OVER JAPAN. LOADED WITH GOLD BULLION, IT HAD SOARED THROUGH AMERICA, GERMANY, AND FRANCE, STRIKING FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE. IT WAS KNOWN AS THE BLACK BAT.

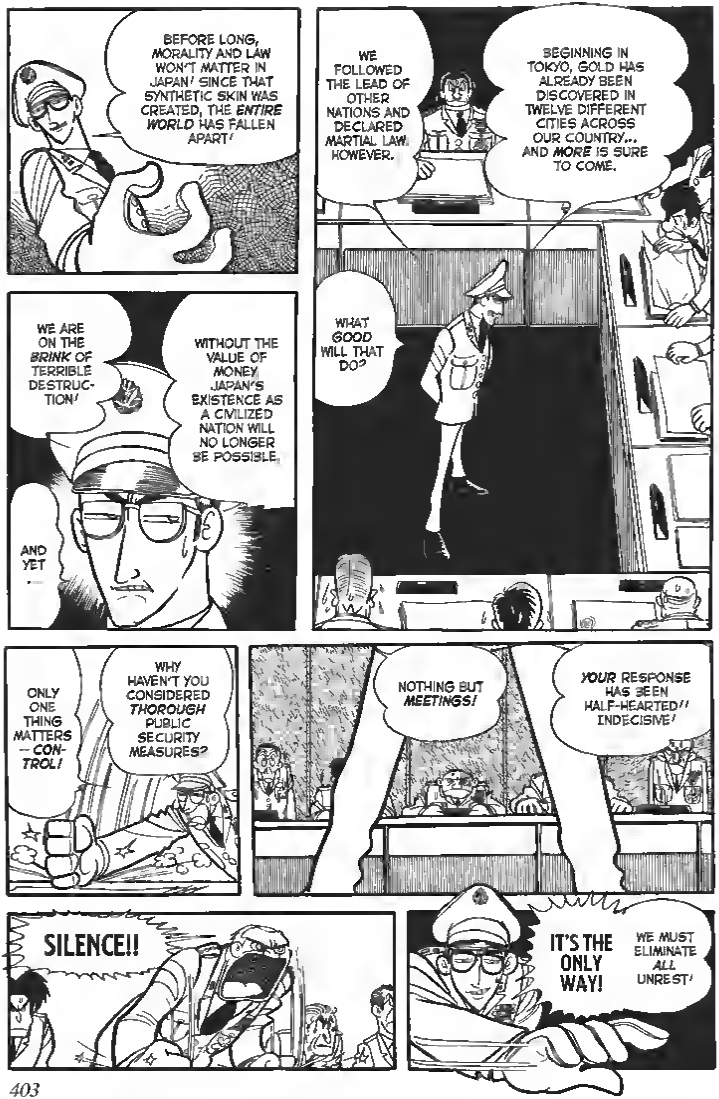
THE GOLD WAS DROPPED AT RANDOM THROUGHOUT THESE COUNTRIES USING BLACK PARACHUTES, APPROPRIATELY.

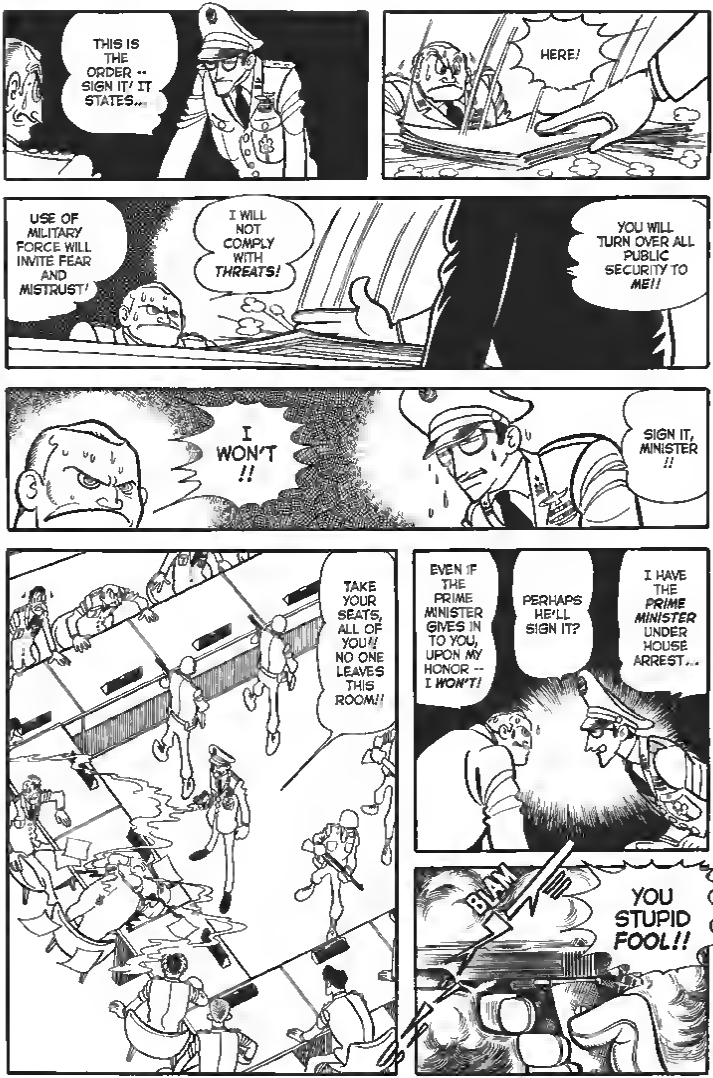

SO FINDING THEM WAS EVEN MORE DIFFI-CULT
TO DISRUPT RADAR, THE PLANES DROPPED A LOT OF DEBRIS...
THE VOLUME OF GOLD WAS SO ENORMOUS, THERE COULDN'T BE ONLY ONE BLACK RAT. NO ONE WAS ABLE TO PREDICT WHEN OR WHERE ONE MIGHT APPEAR NEXT.

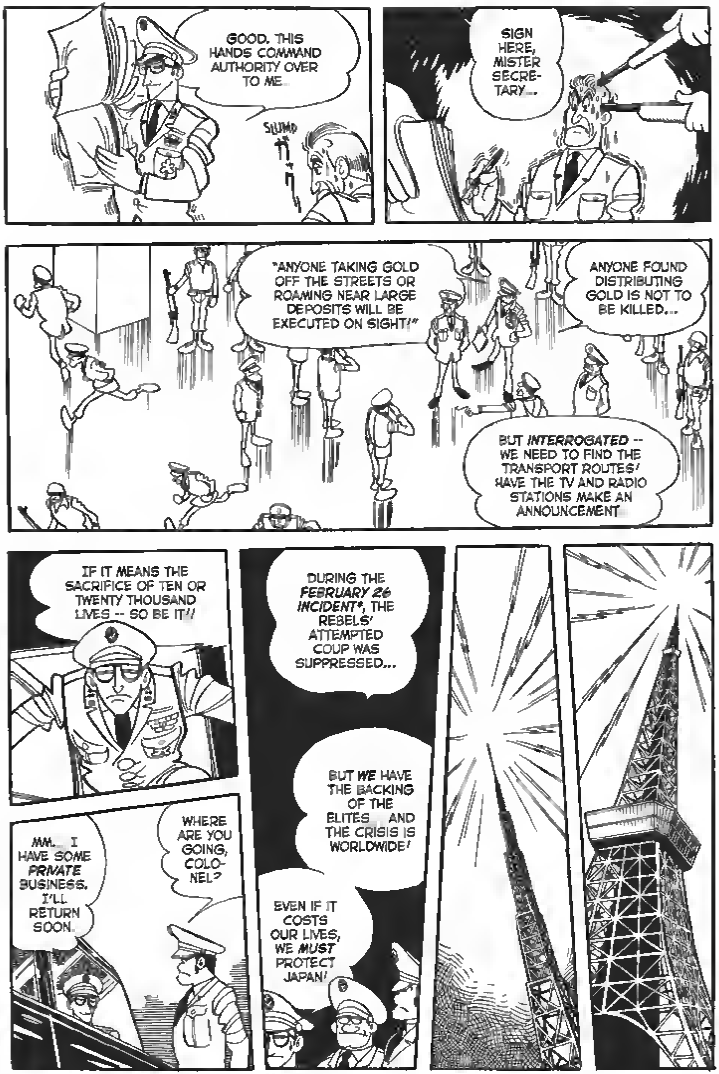

ONCE A BLACK BAT HAD GOTTEN INTO THE COUNTRY, IT COULDN'T BE ATTACKED. IF SHOT DOWN, THE GOLD WOULD ONLY END UP ON THE GROUND. THERE WAS NO CHOICE BUT TO TRY AND DRIVE THE PLANES OUT TO SEA BEFORE THEY COULD DROP THEIR CARGO
SEVERAL PILOTS EJECTED FROM BLACK BATS AND WERE CAPTURED..
BUT WHEN FOUND, THEY WERE ALREADY MAD
EVEN UNDER TORTURE, THEY NEVER GAVE INFORMATION
THE FORMIDABLE ORGANIZATION BEHIND THIS CONSPIRACY...
LEFT ALMOST NO EVIDENCE BEHIND.


防衛庁
JAPAN DEFENSE AGENCY
わあ
わあああ
わあああ
THUD
THUD
THUD
BAM
統合幕僚会議
JOINT STAFF COMMITTEE


THIS IS A CONFERENCE ROOM! WE WON'T ALLOW VIOLENCE HERE!
WHAT IS THIS?!
LOWER YOUR WEAPONS!
COLONEL NOZUE... IT'S YOU!
IN THE INTEREST OF MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER, WE'RE TAKING THE ONLY AVAILABLE MEASURE
IS THIS A COUP?
TAKING COMMAND...? W-WHAT?!
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE SUDDEN INTERRUPTION, BUT I'M TAKING COMMAND OF ALL MINISTRIES STARTING WITH THE DEFENSE AGENCY.
YES, CHIEF OF STAFF SHAKUJII. IT IS I, COLONEL FUTARO NOZUE.
BECAUSE IT'S POINTLESS
WHY NOT SPEAK WITH US?!
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS?!
IF YOU RESIST, DEFENSE MINISTERS OR NOT, YOU'LL BE SHOT.

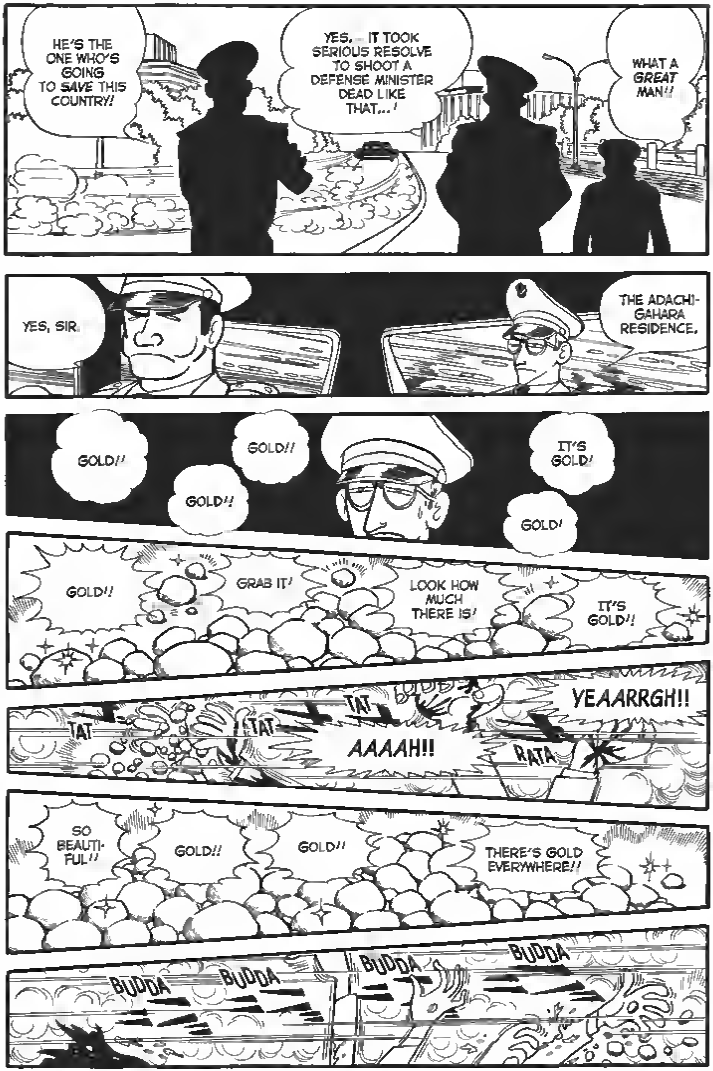

BEFORE LONG, MORALITY AND LAW WON'T MATTER IN JAPAN! SINCE THAT SYNTHETIC SKIN WAS CREATED, THE ENTIRE WORLD HAS FALLEN APART!
WE FOLLOWED THE LEAD OF OTHER NATIONS AND DECLARED MARTIAL LAW. HOWEVER.
BEGINNING IN TOKYO, GOLD HAS ALREADY BEEN DISCOVERED IN TWELVE DIFFERENT CITIES ACROSS OUR COUNTRY... AND MORE IS SURE TO COME.
WHAT GOOD WILL THAT DO?
WE ARE ON THE BRINK OF TERRIBLE DESTRUCTION!
WITHOUT THE VALUE OF MONEY, JAPAN'S EXISTENCE AS A CIVILIZED NATION WILL NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE.
AND YET...
ONLY ONE THING MATTERS — CONTROL!
WHY HAVEN'T YOU CONSIDERED THOROUGH PUBLIC SECURITY MEASURES?
NOTHING BUT MEETINGS!
YOUR RESPONSE HAS BEEN HALF-HEARTED!! INDECISIVE!
SILENCE!!
IT'S THE ONLY WAY!
WE MUST ELIMINATE ALL UNREST!

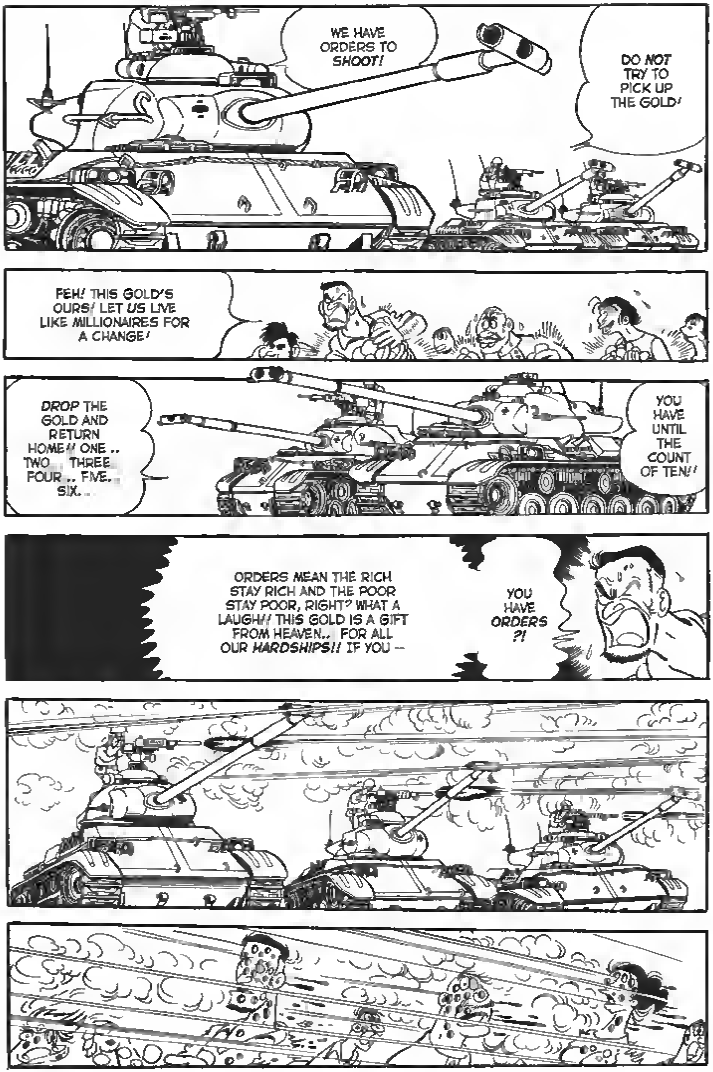

THIS IS THE ORDER -- SIGN IT! IT STATES...
HERE!
USE OF MILITARY FORCE WILL INVITE FEAR AND MISTRUST!
I WILL NOT COMPLY WITH THREATS!
YOU WILL TURN OVER ALL PUBLIC SECURITY TO ME!!
I WON'T !!
SIGN IT, MINISTER !!
TAKE YOUR SEATS, ALL OF YOU!! NO ONE LEAVES THIS ROOM!!
EVEN IF THE PRIME MINISTER GIVES IN TO YOU, UPON MY HONOR -- I WON'T!
PERHAPS HE'LL SIGN IT?
I HAVE THE PRIME MINISTER UNDER HOUSE ARREST...
BLAM
YOU STUPID FOOL!!

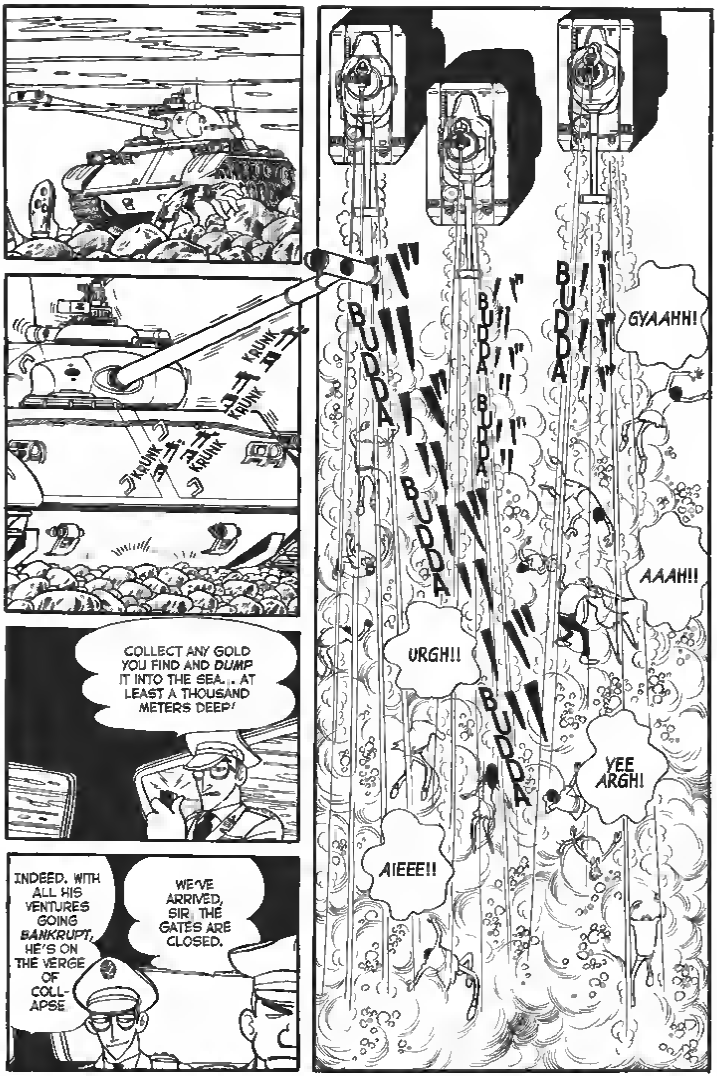

GOOD. THIS HANDS COMMAND AUTHORITY OVER TO ME...
SLUMP
SIGN HERE, MISTER SECRETARY...
"ANYONE TAKING GOLD OFF THE STREETS OR ROAMING NEAR LARGE DEPOSITS WILL BE EXECUTED ON SIGHT!"
ANYONE FOUND DISTRIBUTING GOLD IS NOT TO BE KILLED...
BUT *INTERROGATED* -- WE NEED TO FIND THE TRANSPORT ROUTES! HAVE THE TV AND RADIO STATIONS MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT
IF IT MEANS THE SACRIFICE OF TEN OR TWENTY THOUSAND LIVES -- SO BE IT!!
DURING THE *FEBRUARY 26 INCIDENT*, THE REBELS' ATTEMPTED COUP WAS SUPPRESSED...
BUT *WE* HAVE THE BACKING OF THE ELITES... AND THE CRISIS IS WORLDWIDE!
EVEN IF IT COSTS OUR LIVES, WE *MUST* PROTECT JAPAN!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, COLONEL?
MM... I HAVE SOME *PRIVATE* BUSINESS. I'LL RETURN SOON.



ATTEMPTED JAPANESE COUP LAUNCHED FEB. 26 1936


HE'S THE ONE WHO'S GOING TO SAVE THIS COUNTRY!
YES, IT TOOK SERIOUS RESOLVE TO SHOOT A DEFENSE MINISTER DEAD LIKE THAT...!
WHAT A GREAT MAN!!
YES, SIR.
THE ADACHI-GAHARA RESIDENCE.
GOLD!!
GOLD!!
GOLD!!
IT'S GOLD!
GOLD!
GOLD!!
GRAB IT!
LOOK HOW MUCH THERE IS!
IT'S GOLD!!
TAT
TAT
TAT
AAAAH!!
YEAARRGH!!
RATA
SO BEAUTI-FUL!!
GOLD!!
GOLD!!
THERE'S GOLD EVERYWHERE!!
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA

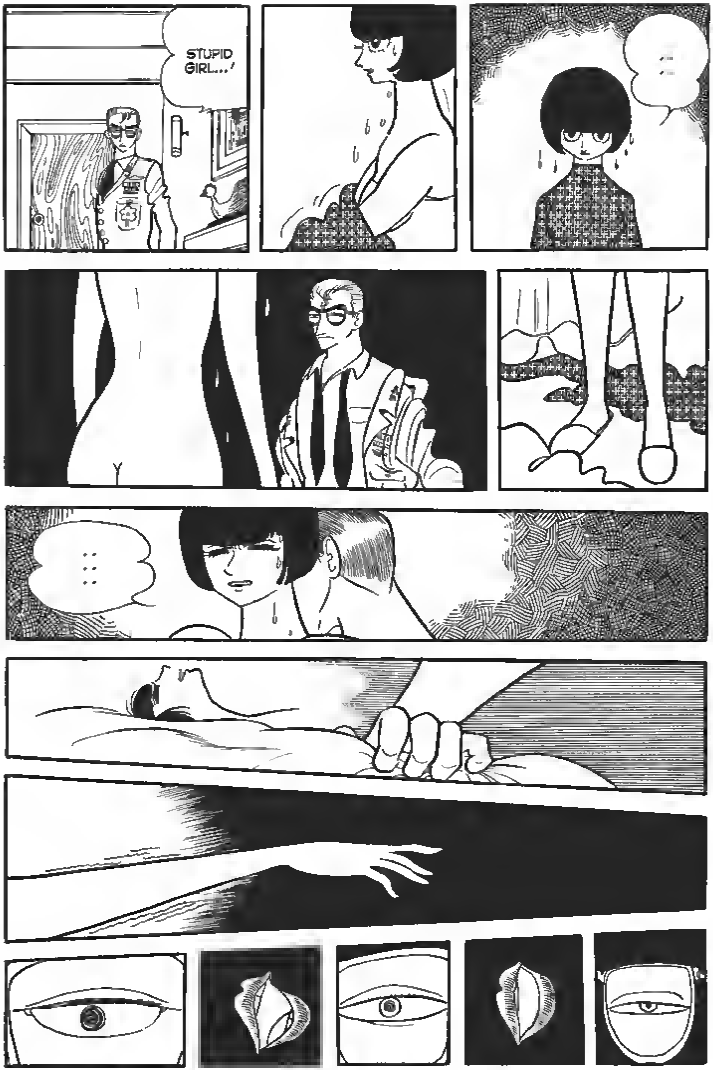

WE HAVE ORDERS TO *SHOOT!*
DO *NOT* TRY TO PICK UP THE GOLD!
FEH! THIS GOLD'S OURS! LET *US* LIVE LIKE MILLIONAIRES FOR A CHANGE!
*DROP* THE GOLD AND RETURN HOME!! ONE .. TWO .. THREE .. FOUR .. FIVE .. SIX ..
YOU HAVE UNTIL THE COUNT OF TEN!!
ORDERS MEAN THE RICH STAY RICH AND THE POOR STAY POOR, RIGHT? WHAT A LAUGH!! THIS GOLD IS A GIFT FROM HEAVEN.. FOR ALL OUR *HARDSHIPS!!* IF YOU --
YOU HAVE *ORDERS* ?!


KRUNK
KRUNK
KRUNK
KRUNK
KRUNK
COLLECT ANY GOLD YOU FIND AND *DUMP* IT INTO THE SEA... AT LEAST A THOUSAND METERS DEEP!
INDEED. WITH ALL HIS VENTURES GOING *BANKRUPT*, HE'S ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE
WE'VE ARRIVED, SIR. THE GATES ARE CLOSED.
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
GYAAHH!
AAAH!!
URGH!!
YEE ARGH!
AIEEE!!

FU TARO ...!
IT'S ME -- FUTARO
YES ...!
THAT I'VE BECOME SUPREME COMMANDER?
THINK ...? I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BEG FOR YOUR HELP!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YOU HAVE TO HELP US!! PLEASE!! IF PAPA LOSES EVERYTHING ... HE'LL KILL HIMSELF!! I'M... I'M SO AFRAID!!
THAT'S RIGHT. THE FATE OF YOU BOURGEOISIE... RESTS IN MY HANDS.
FUTARO.. I HEARD ON THE NEWS...
WHERE'S THE OLD MAN, NANA?
HE NEVER LEAVES THE COMPANY.. WITH ALL THIS CHAOS, IT'S A DANGEROUS PLACE TO BE, BUT.. HE'S LIKE A MAN POSSESSED!

WHAT WAS IT YOU ALWAYS CALLED ME?
YOUR ATTITUDE'S CHANGED, HASN'T IT?
OHH. PLEASE STAY HERE, FUTARO!! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN TRUST!
IT'S MY DUTY TO PROTECT YOU.
I... I NEVER MEANT THAT...!
"A CHILD BORN FROM MONEY"?
BUT I DESPISE MONEY... AND THOSE SPREADING THE GOLD!!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT I AM THE SON OF A GEISHA...
THE OLD MAN FELL IN LOVE WITH A GEISHA, AND EVEN THOUGH SHE REFUSED HIM, HIS MONEY FINALLY WON HER OVER! OUT OF THAT, I WAS BORN... A CHILD BORN FROM MONEY... LIKE YOU ALWAYS SAID...
THEN YOU'D BE REDUCED TO POVERTY, TOO...!
HOW OFTEN I WISHED FOR THE OLD MAN TO LOSE EVERYTHING... BECOME HOMELESS!!
YOU MOCKED ME, DIDN'T YOU?
AND IGNORED ME AS A PATHETIC PIECE OF TRASH!
I HAD A DREAM ONCE. YOU APPEARED BEFORE ME, SOLEMN, LIKE A QUEEN...
STOP...!
STOP IT!

PLEASE! FORGIVE ME!! I'LL DO ANYTHING!
I'M SUPREME COMMANDER NOW... I HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO WORRY ABOUT EVERY COMPANY THAT SUFFERS
YOU'RE.. JUST GOING TO ABANDON PAPA..?!
I HAVE TO GO.
BUT IN EXCHANGE.. PLEASE HELP US... I BEG YOU!
FINE! GO AHEAD -- HATE ME!
YOU'RE ENJOYING YOUR REVENGE, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT?!
SLEEP WITH ME!!
I'LL DO ANY-THING ... PLEASE..!
THAT WORD HAS NEVER PASSED YOUR LIPS TO ME BEFORE. YOU ALWAYS THOUGHT OF ME AS A STRANGER, DIDN'T YOU?
FAMILY?
WE'RE... FAMILY!!
SLEEP... W-WITH YOU?!
WAIT!!
THEN I'M THROUGH WITH BOTH OF YOU.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, FINE..
FUTARO!! YOU'RE BEING.. SO CRUEL!
YOU CAN SLEEP WITH A STRANG-ER, CAN'T YOU?

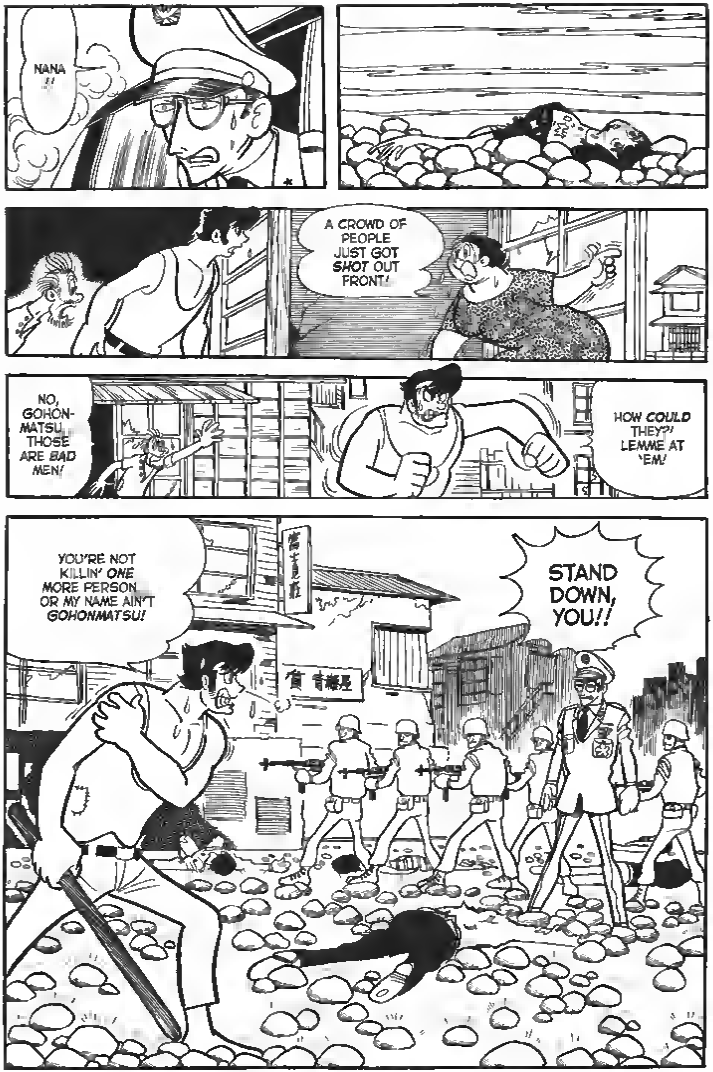

STUPID GIRL...!

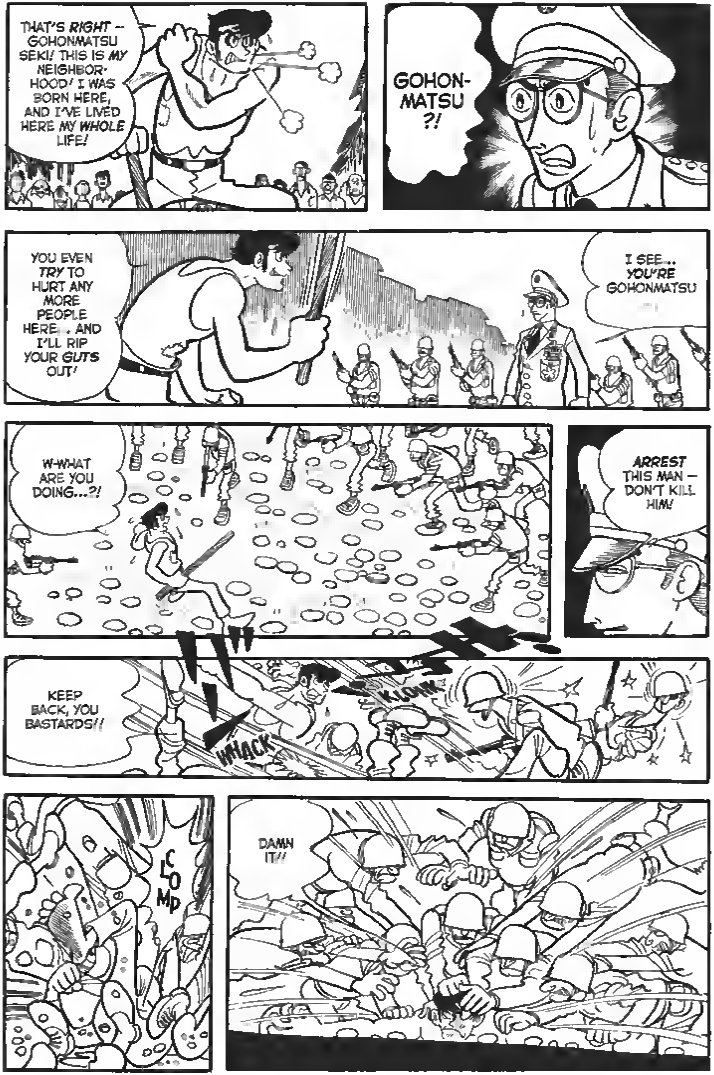
IT'S THE OLD MAN.
COMPLETELY... BANKRUPT...?
WHAT?!
THE BANKS ARE CLOSED... AND WORSE, OUR MONEY IS AS WORTHLESS AS SAND NOW... IT'S ALL OVER...!
NANA... TRY TO BE CALM. . ALL RIGHT...? NOW, LISTEN CLOSELY... THE COMPANY'S FINISHED...
OHH, WHAT CAN I DO?
THE COMPANY'S BANKRUPT.. WE'RE PENNILESS...
PAPA, BE STRONG!
I'LL TAKE YOU THERE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE..?
ADA-CHI-GAHA-RA!!
I SAID I DIDN'T WANT ANY MORE TO DO WITH YOU!
GOHONWATSU!! MAKE A BED! HE LOOKS SICK!
ADACHI-GAHARA? YOU LOOK LIKE THE WALKING DEAD..
SCUMP
WHAT... BANK-RUPT? REALLY?
I'VE LOST EVERY-THING!!
I'M BANKRUPT .. IT HAPPENED SO FAST...
WHAT? WHY SAY SUCH A THING?
PLEASE HELP ME.... SEKI.. I... I WISH I WERE DEAD...!

NOW EVERYONE HAS SO MUCH, IT ISN'T WORTH A ROTTEN TEN YEN. . .!
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF... THAT GOLD!!
WELL, I HEAR MORE AND MORE COMPANIES ARE GOING UNDER THESE DAYS ...!
GOHON-MATSU..., NEVER HAD EYES FOR GOLD, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
IT'S MY SON! I FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, SEE?
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME.. HOW YOU DO IT!
BECAUSE... YOU'RE POOR, SEKI, BUT YOU SEEM HAPPY...
SO WHY DID YOU COME HERE?
THEN I'LL THINK ABOUT IT!
LEMME HAVE A DRINK FIRST.
HMM... WELL...
PLEASE TELL ME... YOU HEARD ME EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO YOUR FATHER... WHAT SHOULD I DO?
TELL HIM, SON!
RAAH
RAAH
RAAH
RAAH
RAAH
SOMEONE FOUND GOLD EVEN ON OUR STREET... SOUNDS LIKE A BIG HUBBUB!
SAY! WHAT'S THE COM-MOTION?
WHAT THE HELL GOOD'S A DRINK GONNA DO AT A TIME LIKE THIS ?!!

LOOK! GOLD!
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
NANA !!
PAPA!!
OH! THERE'S PAPA'S CAR!
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
SHRPP
SHRPP
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA


NANA!!
A CROWD OF PEOPLE JUST GOT SHOT OUT FRONT!
NO, GOHONMATSU, THOSE ARE BAD MEN!
HOW COULD THEY?! LEMME AT 'EM!
YOU'RE NOT KILLIN' ONE MORE PERSON OR MY NAME AIN'T GOHONMATSU!
STAND DOWN, YOU!!


THAT'S RIGHT — GOHONMATSU SEKI! THIS IS MY NEIGHBORHOOD! I WAS BORN HERE, AND I'VE LIVED HERE MY WHOLE LIFE!
GOHONMATSU ?!
YOU EVEN TRY TO HURT ANY MORE PEOPLE HERE... AND I'LL RIP YOUR GUTS OUT!
I SEE... YOU'RE GOHONMATSU
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?!
ARREST THIS MAN — DON'T KILL HIM!
KEEP BACK, YOU BASTARDS!!
WHACK
KLONK
COMP
DAMN IT!!

WHAP
KRAK
POW
SLASH
CHOK
FWSSHH
HRRK- IT'S TEAR GAS
MOVE !!
KOFF KOFF KOFF... N-NO FAIR.. AHH... HUHH... KOFF KOFF KOFF...
GOHONMATSU!!
DON'T TAKE MY SON!!
I BET YOU'LL TELL US ALL SORTS OF INTERESTING THINGS AFTER WE SQUEEZE THEM OUT OF YOU!
NANA!!
NANA!!
...
GASP

IS THAT SO? WELL, THERE'S ONE IMPORTANT THING LEFT...
I ALREADY TOLD YOU *EVERYTHING* I KNOW! EVERYTHING ABOUT ZEPHYRUS AND MAMOO... YOU CAN KEEP ASKIN', BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY MORE! I CAN'T *TELL* YOU WHAT I DON'T KNOW!!

WHO IS SHE?

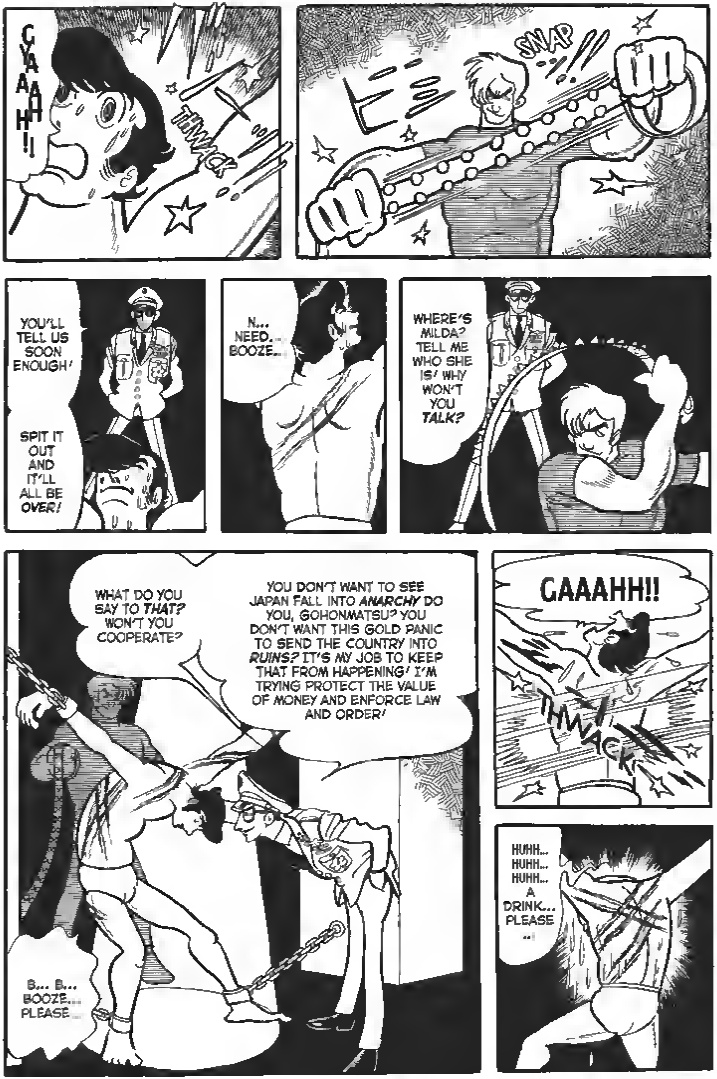
MILDA.

*YOU... SON... OF... A --!*

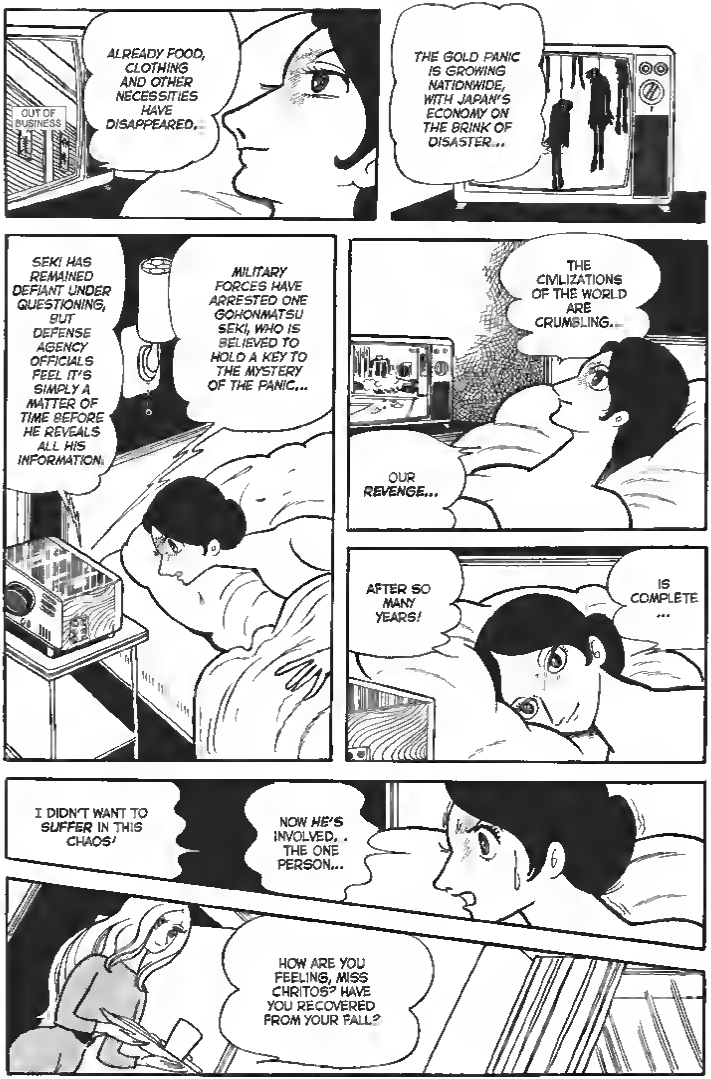
...
...

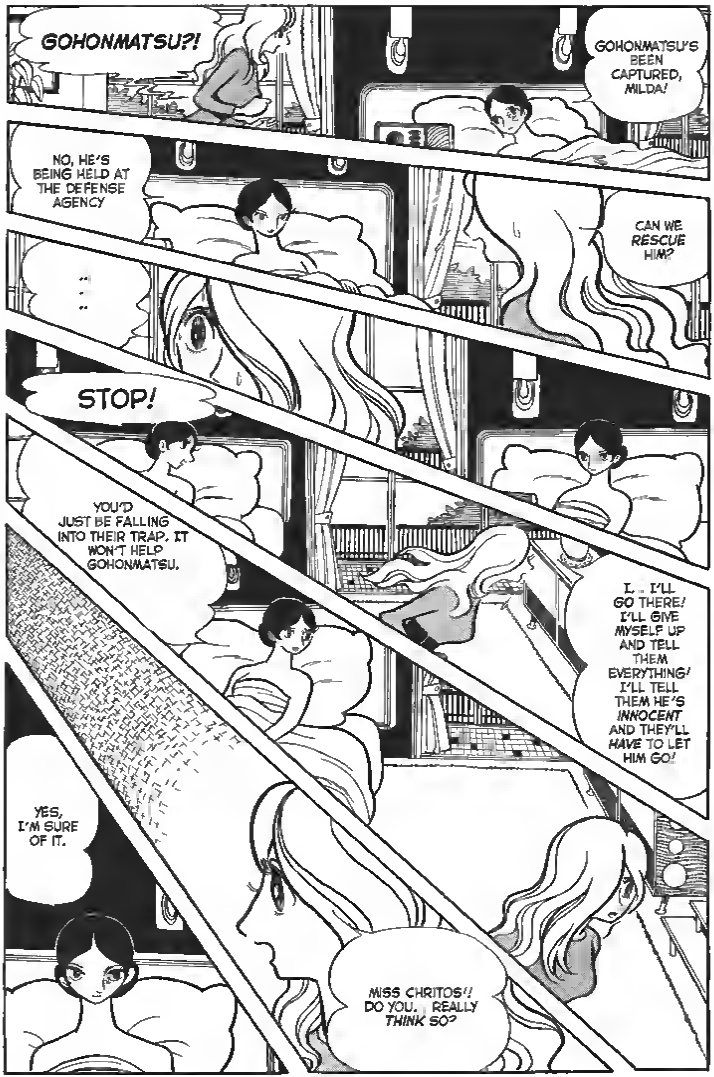
WHERE IS SHE? WHERE'S SHE *HIDING* ?!
DON'T *TOY* WITH ME, FOOL!

HUH? SOUNDS LIKE THE NAME OF A *STRAY CAT!*

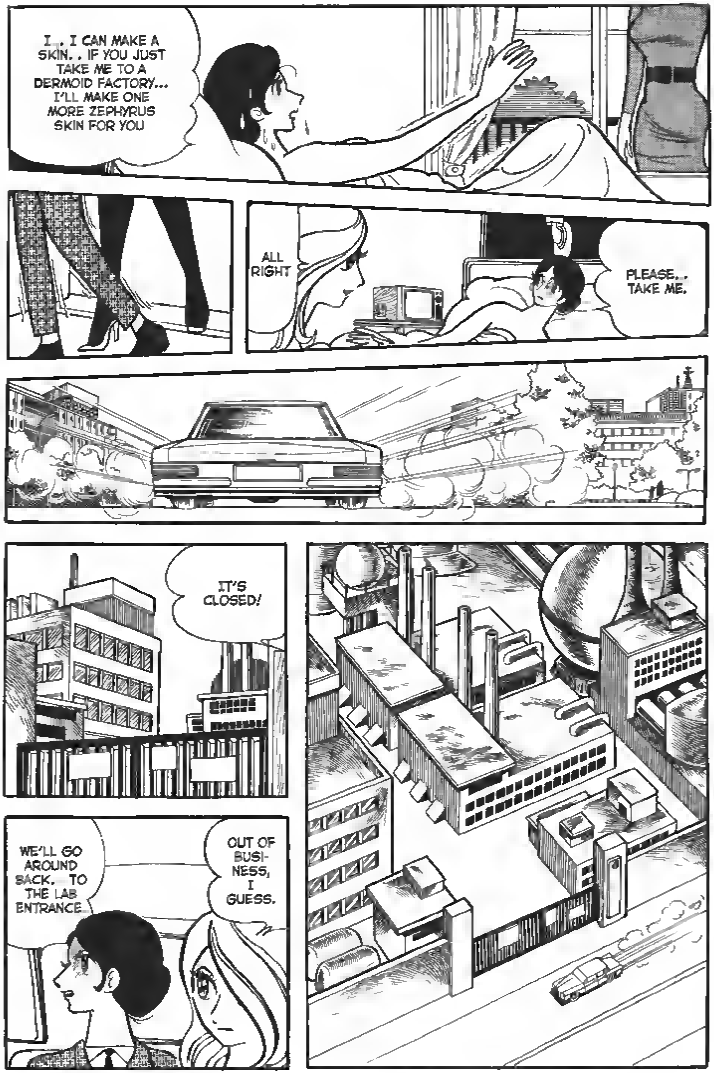

GYAAAHH!!
THWACK
SNAP
YOU'LL TELL US SOON ENOUGH!
SPIT IT OUT AND IT'LL ALL BE OVER!
N... NEED... BOOZE...
WHERE'S MILDA? TELL ME WHO SHE IS! WHY WON'T YOU TALK?
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT? WON'T YOU COOPERATE?
YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE JAPAN FALL INTO ANARCHY DO YOU, GOHONMATSU? YOU DON'T WANT THIS GOLD PANIC TO SEND THE COUNTRY INTO RUINS? IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP THAT FROM HAPPENING! I'M TRYING PROTECT THE VALUE OF MONEY AND ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER!
B... B... BOOZE... PLEASE...
GAAAHH!!
THWACK
HUHH... HUHH... HUHH... A DRINK... PLEASE...

FINE -- HERE'S YOUR DRINK!
WHACK
WHACK
WHERE'S MILDA?!
THWACK
WE HAVE MANY WAYS OF TORTURE THAT THE SPECIAL POLICE HAVE USED FOR YEARS
IT'S AN ENDURANCE CONTEST, THEN
THIS'LL GIVE SUFFERING NEW MEANING FOR YOU! HEH HEH HEH
START WITH THAT ONE!


ALREADY FOOD, CLOTHING AND OTHER NECESSITIES HAVE DISAPPEARED...
OUT OF BUSINESS
THE GOLD PANIC IS GROWING NATIONWIDE, WITH JAPAN'S ECONOMY ON THE BRINK OF DISASTER...
SEKI HAS REMAINED DEFIANT UNDER QUESTIONING, BUT DEFENSE AGENCY OFFICIALS FEEL IT'S SIMPLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE REVEALS ALL HIS INFORMATION.
MILITARY FORCES HAVE ARRESTED ONE GOHONMATSU SEKI, WHO IS BELIEVED TO HOLD A KEY TO THE MYSTERY OF THE PANIC...
THE CIVILIZATIONS OF THE WORLD ARE CRUMBLING...
OUR REVENGE...
AFTER SO MANY YEARS!
IS COMPLETE ...
I DIDN'T WANT TO SUFFER IN THIS CHAOS!
NOW HE'S INVOLVED. . THE ONE PERSON...
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, MISS CHRITOS? HAVE YOU RECOVERED FROM YOUR FALL?


GOHONMATSU?!
GOHONMATSU'S BEEN CAPTURED, MILDA!
NO, HE'S BEING HELD AT THE DEFENSE AGENCY
CAN WE *RESCUE* HIM?
...
STOP!
YOU'D JUST BE FALLING INTO THEIR TRAP. IT WON'T HELP GOHONMATSU.
I... I'LL GO THERE! I'LL GIVE *MYSELF* UP AND TELL THEM EVERYTHING! I'LL TELL THEM HE'S *INNOCENT* AND THEY'LL *HAVE* TO LET HIM GO!
YES, I'M SURE OF IT.
MISS CHRITOS?! DO YOU... REALLY *THINK* SO?

I'M WORRIED, TOO!
IF YOU'RE PREPARED TO FACE DEATH, MILDA, THEN WORK WITH ME TO SAVE GOHONMATSU!
HOW CAN I, MISS CHRITOS?
YOU WANT TO TAKE GOHONMATSU AWAY FROM ME!
I'LL FIND A WAY TO SAVE HIM!
EVEN IF MY SISTERS TRIED TO TAKE GOHONMATSU, I'D FIGHT THEM TO THE END!
CALM DOWN AND LISTEN TO ME, MILDA!! IF YOU WANT TO SAVE HIM... YOU'LL HAVE TO USE DERMOID Z...
AND BE-COME ZEPH-YRUS AGAIN!


I... I CAN MAKE A SKIN.. IF YOU JUST TAKE ME TO A DERMOID FACTORY... I'LL MAKE ONE MORE ZEPHYRUS SKIN FOR YOU
ALL RIGHT
PLEASE... TAKE ME.
IT'S CLOSED!
WE'LL GO AROUND BACK. TO THE LAB ENTRANCE.
OUT OF BUSI-NESS, I GUESS.

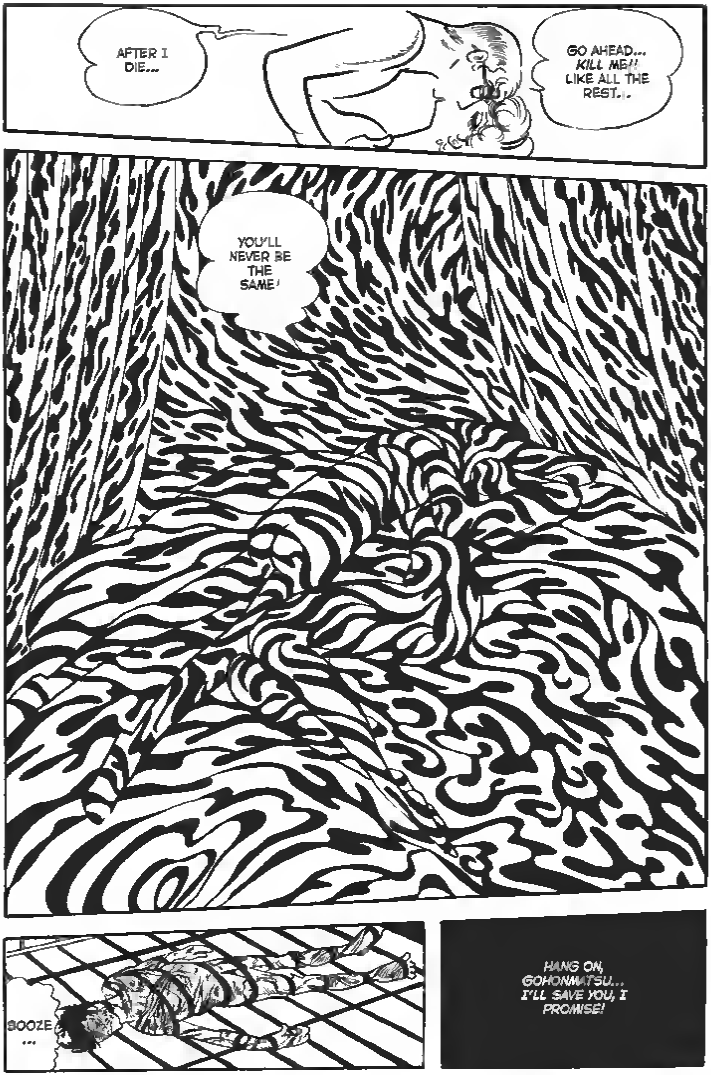
I NEED A FEW HOURS.
NOW I'M USING IT TO SAVE A MAN HOW IRONIC.
I INVENTED DERMOID TWENTY YEARS AGO, FULL OF HATRED FOR MEN. .
GOHON-MATSU ..
I KNOW I'M OLDER, AND MILDA IS HERE FOR YOU.. I WON'T LONG FOR YOU ANY MORE...
FOR THE KINDNESS OF ALLOWING ME TO FEEL LIKE A WOMAN AGAIN... I'M GRATEFUL TO YOU!

FINE, WE'LL CONTINUE IN THE MORNING. LOCK HIM UP.
HE'S UNCONSCIOUS.. FOR THE FIFTH TIME! ANY MORE MIGHT KILL HIM.
PEACE DOESN'T PROTECT THE PEACE! (WITH OBVIOUS CONTEMPT)
..WELL, YOU SAY YOU'RE ENFORCING THE LAW, BUT TO DO SO, DO YOU THINK IT'S ALL RIGHT TO ACT LAWLESSLY?
A HUMBLE NAME LESS REPORTER
記者会見室
PRESS CONFERENCE
RIGHT! I'D BETTER GET GOING
IN FACT, THE AMBASSADOR OF ONE SUCH COUNTRY IS EXPECTING YOU NOW AT THE HOTEL NEW MONEY.
COUNTRIES OVERSEAS HAVE LOOKED AT THE MEASURES WE'VE TAKEN HERE WITH BEWILDERMENT..
A REPORTER FOR A MAJOR NEWSPAPER (RIGHT-WING)
HOTEL NEW MONEY
PARKING

ドキッ
JOLT
OUI, MONSIEUR!
THE AMBASSADOR ... IS HERE?
PERHAPS MY EYES DECEIVE ME ..? NO HUMAN COULD POSSESS SUCH STARTLING BEAUTY! ARE YOU A DEVIL IN DISGUISE?
SO BEAUTIFUL ...
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
NOT AT ALL! I AM ZEPHYRUS.
MA MOO ..?
HO HO .. YOU'RE SURPRISED?
I'VE COME FROM MAMOO.
ZEPHYRUS?!
WILL YOU ARREST ME?
GOING TO CALL YOUR SOLDIERS?
CLITTER
UNLESS YOU TALK
I WILL ..

WHAT IS THIS WOMAN .. DOING TO ME?
DON'T WASTE MY TIME... I'M A BUSY MAN
FIRST, HOW ABOUT A DRINK?
STOP STARING AT ME!
HA... HA HA HA HA HA!

...
...
...
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
MY BODY IS WORTH *MUCH!* MORE THAN JEWELS! MORE THAN YOUR *LIFE!*
*WHORE!* I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU!
YEEAAARGH!
AIEEE!!
I KNOW YOU'VE KILLED *DOZENS* OF MEN... LIKE THE *WITCH* YOU ARE...!

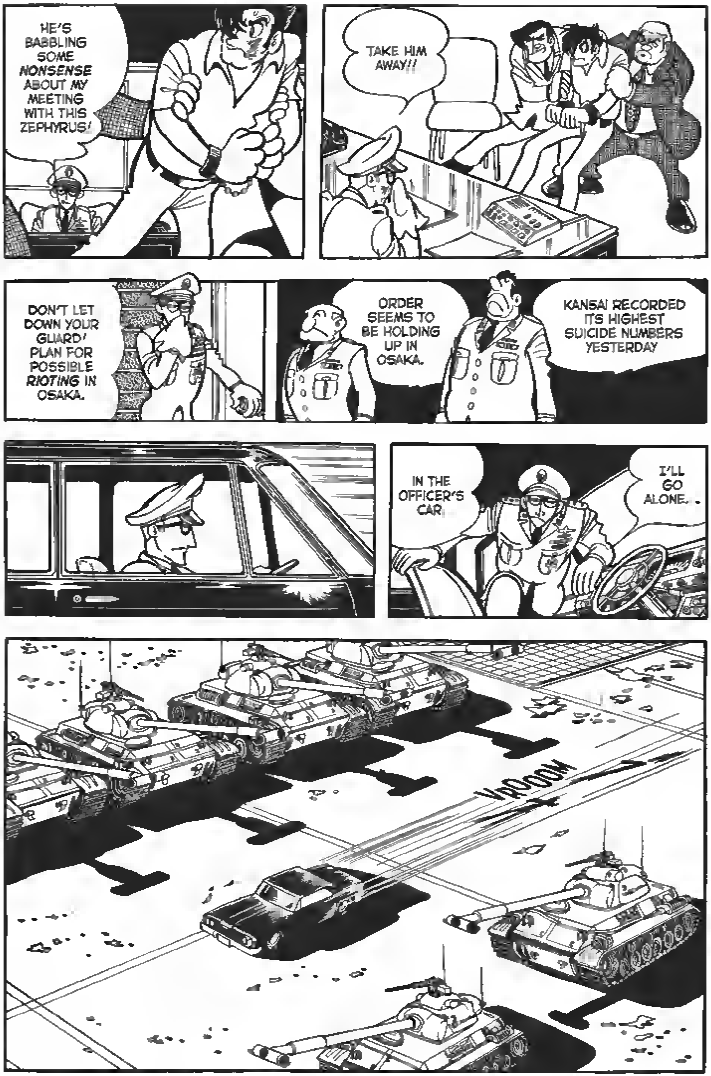

AFTER I DIE...
GO AHEAD... KILL ME!! LIKE ALL THE REST...
YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME!
BOOZE ...
HANG ON, GOHONMATSU... I'LL SAVE YOU, I PROMISE!

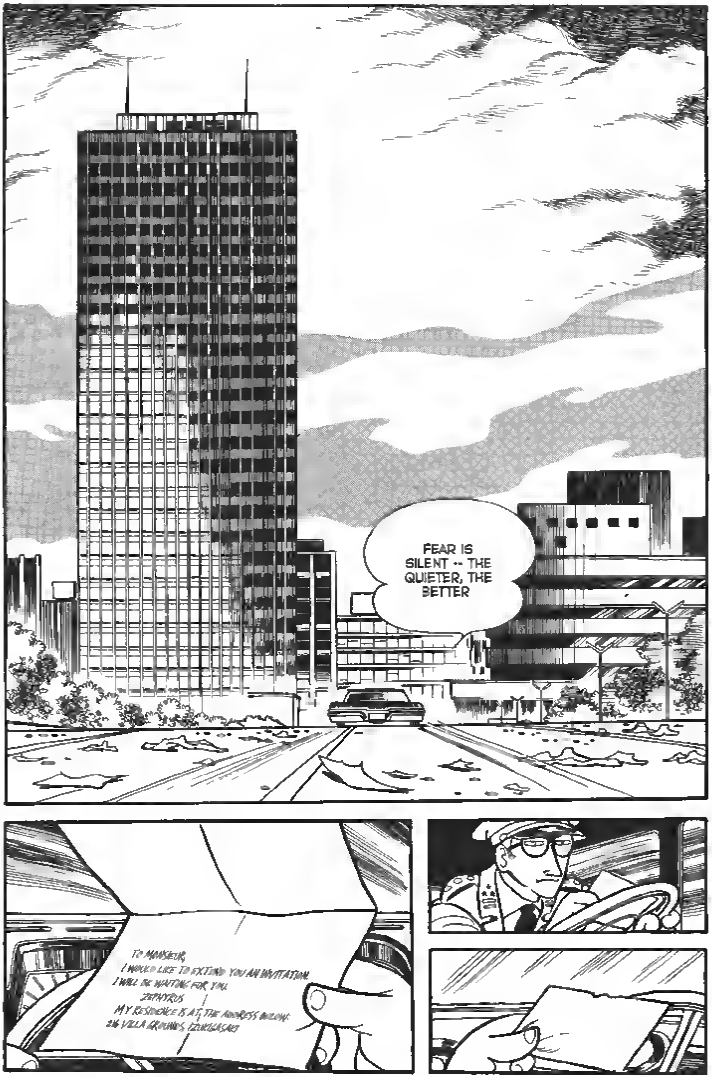
WHUMP
I'LL SPEAK WITH HIM ALONE BRING HIM HERE!!
HE'S STILL NOT TALKING, COLONEL NOZUE SHALL WE CONTINUE?

SIT DOWN!
I'M IMPRESSED WITH YOUR TENACITY, YOU KNOW.
GIMME BOOZE.
NO BOOZE... YOU CAN HAVE A CIGARETTE, I GUESS.
BUT IF I LET YOU GO, I'D LOOK LIKE A FOOL. THE TRUTH IS...
...
I'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST YOU PERSONALLY... I ALMOST ADMIRE YOU, IN FACT.

BETWEEN US...
AN UNCANNY WOMAN!
SHE WAS MORE THAN YOU DESCRIBED
I MET ZEPHYRUS.
THAT WITCH?
ARREST HER?
WHY DIDN'T YOU ARREST HER...?
I'VE TOLD NO ONE ELSE, YOU UNDERSTAND
SHE'S BEWITCHED ME COMPLETELY.
FRANKLY ...
SHE'D VANISH INTO THIN AIR THE MOMENT I GAVE THE ORDER, WOULDN'T SHE?
I CAN'T JUSTIFY YOUR RELEASE.
BUT...
THERE'S NO MORE NEED TO QUESTION YOU...
:HMPH:
NO, I PREFER TO LEAVE HER BE.
IF ZEPHYRUS DID DISAPPEAR, I MIGHT GO INSANE

WELL? JUST TALK AND I'LL MAKE THINGS EASY FOR YOU!
TELL ME, WE'LL ARREST HER, AND THE INVESTIGATION CAN PROCEED OPENLY!
WHAT DO YOU SAY? TELL ME WHERE THE MILDA WOMAN IS
WHY DON'T WE SETTLE ALL THIS?
ZUNK
YOU'D REFUSE MY GOOD WILL?
DOG!
NOPE.
SERVES YOU RIGHT!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR?!
DZZT


HE'S BABBLING SOME *NONSENSE* ABOUT MY MEETING WITH THIS ZEPHYRUS!
TAKE HIM AWAY!!
DON'T LET DOWN YOUR GUARD! PLAN FOR POSSIBLE *RIOTING* IN OSAKA.
ORDER SEEMS TO BE HOLDING UP IN OSAKA.
KANSAI RECORDED ITS HIGHEST SUICIDE NUMBERS YESTERDAY
IN THE OFFICER'S CAR.
I'LL GO ALONE. .
VROOOM

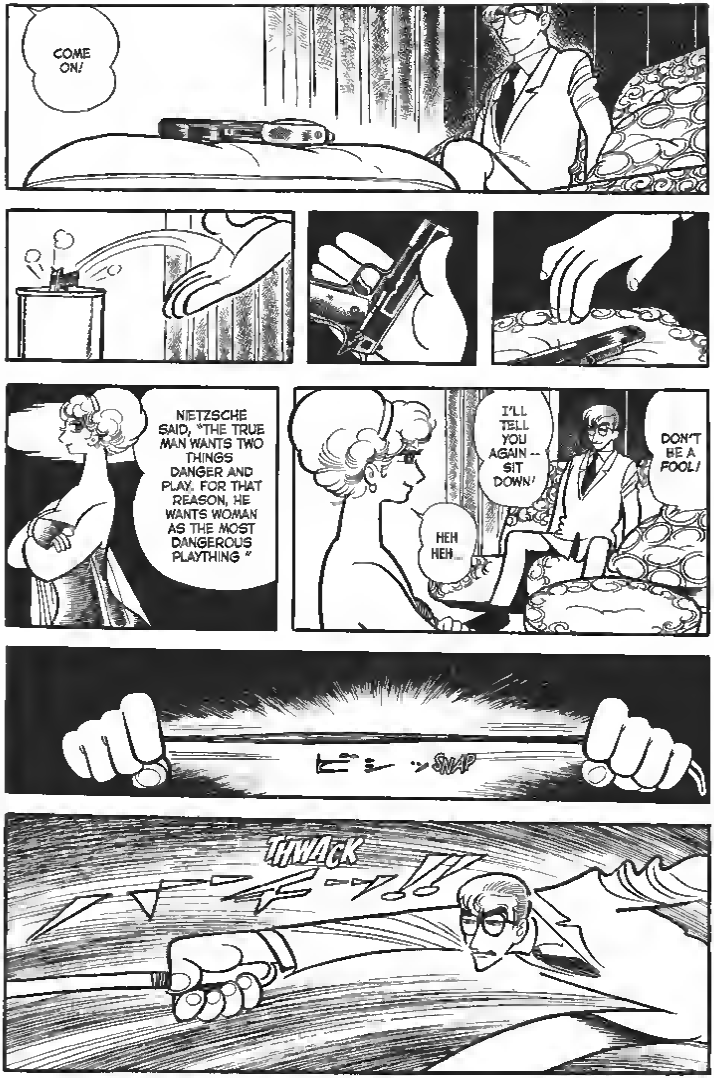

FEAR IS SILENT -- THE QUIETER, THE BETTER
TO MONSIEUR,
I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND YOU AN INVITATION.
I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU.
ZATHOTOS
MY RESIDENCE IS AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:
216 VILLA GRAINES, TZOUSSAKART

SLAM

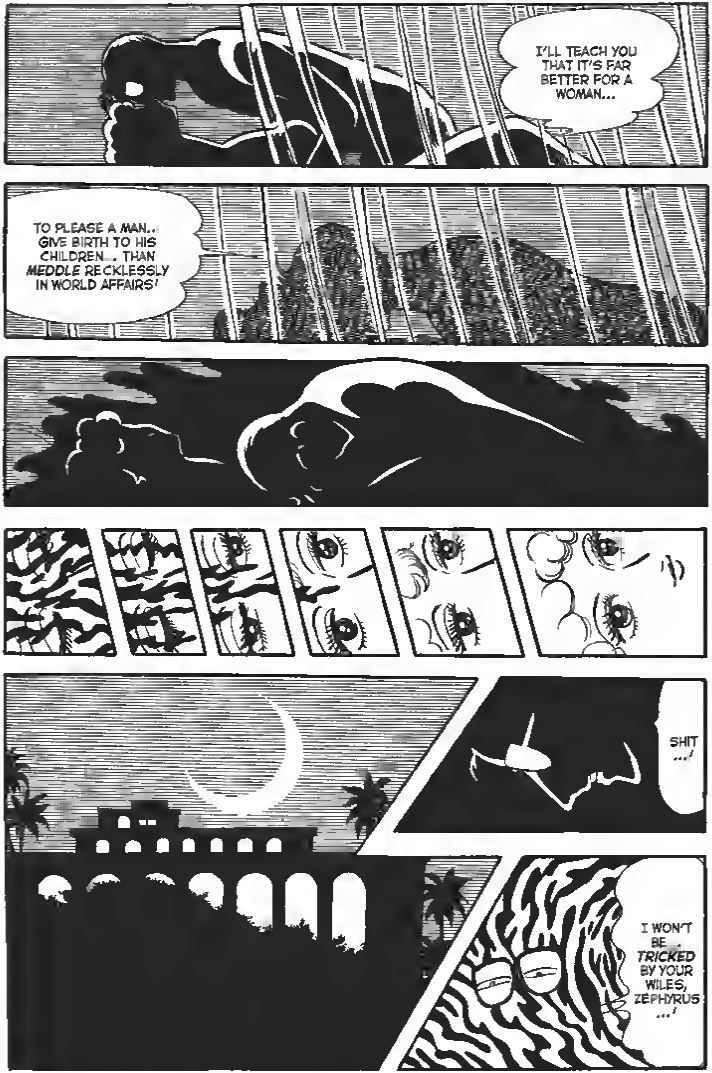
MONSIEUR, I'VE BEEN *WAITING!*

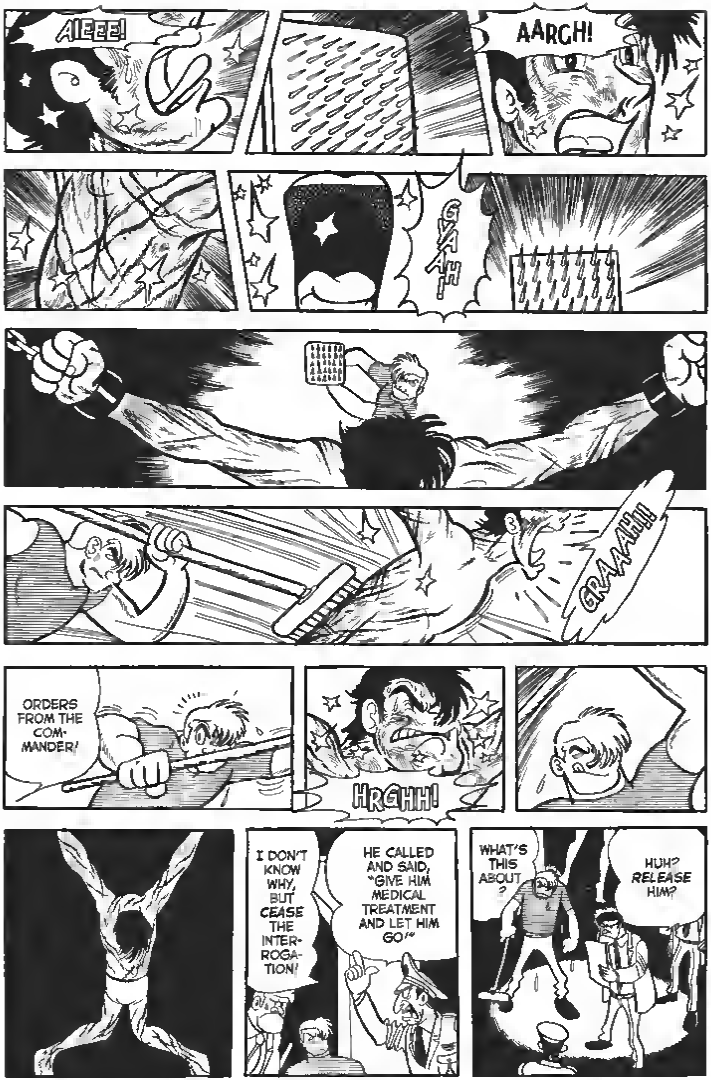
HEE HEE HEE.. I'VE DONE NO SUCH THING!
YOU'VE SET SOME KIND OF *TRAP*, HAVEN'T YOU?
YOU REALLY HAVE NO SHAME ABOUT YOUR CONSPIRACY
SO THIS IS YOUR *RETREAT*, EH?
WOULD YOU LIKE A DRINK? I'LL JOIN YOU...!
DON'T WORRY. I CAME ALONE.
ZEPHYRUS.. WHY HAVE YOU DONE ALL THIS? YOU THINK IT'S SO EASY TO DESTROY THE CIVILIZATION *MAN* HAS BUILT?
REGARDLESS, YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL BE *FINISHED* SOON.
NO.
STILL NOT GOING TO ARREST *ME*?

IT'S NOTHING THAT CAN'T BE CHECKED BY FIRM PUBLIC ORDER... HERE IN JAPAN, AT LEAST.
SMUG, AREN'T YOU? WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD IS MY DELUSION, IS IT?
A WOMAN'S DELU-SIONS
THEN DO SO!
I'LL CRUSH YOUR OVERCONFIDENT IDEALISM, AND REDUCE YOU TO THE SIMPLE, WEAK WOMAN YOU ARE!
I WILL NOT BE RE-STRAINED!
LET GO OF ME!
OR SHOOT ME, PERHAPS? THEN IT WILL ALL BE OVER.
WILL YOU CRUCIFY ME?
AND IF I SAY NO...
HO HO...! YOU SOUND LIKE A ROMAN EMPEROR!
SIT DOWN!
DO AS YOU PLEASE ... SHOOT ME.
I AM THE QUEEN OF MAMOO


COME ON!
NIETZSCHE SAID, "THE TRUE MAN WANTS TWO THINGS DANGER AND PLAY. FOR THAT REASON, HE WANTS WOMAN AS THE MOST DANGEROUS PLAYTHING."
HEH HEH...
I'LL TELL YOU AGAIN -- SIT DOWN!
DON'T BE A FOOL!
SNAP
THWACK

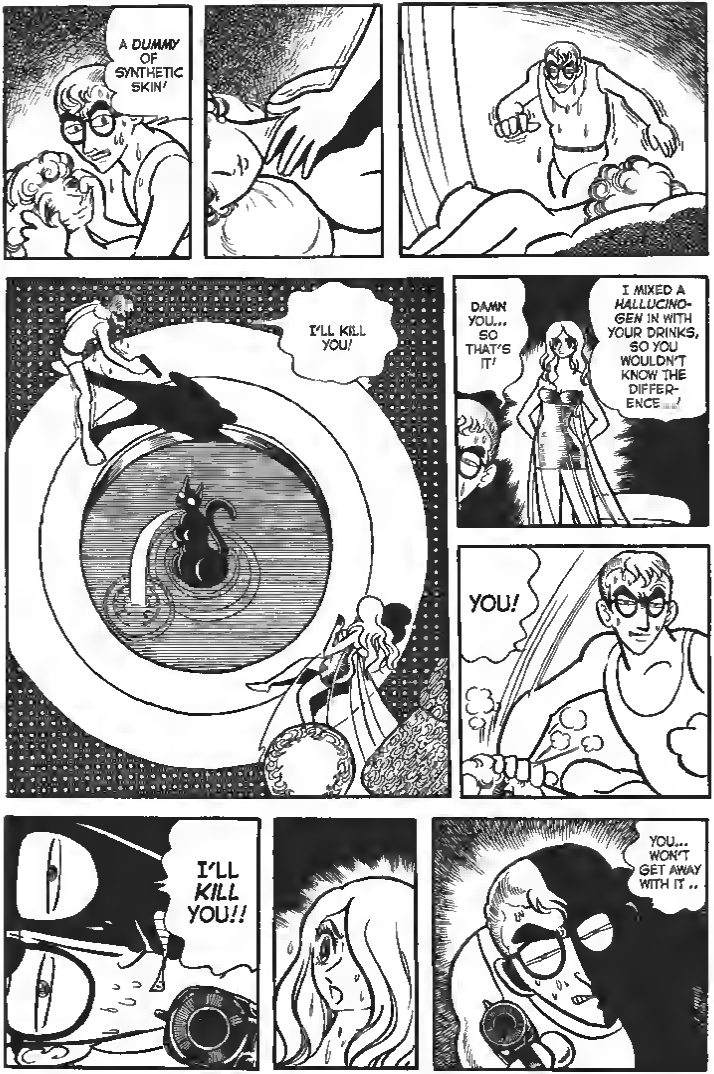
SHARIP
A THIRD TIME — SIT DOWN!
"A WOMAN'S LOVE FOR US INCREASES THE LESS WE LOVE HER."
AND PUSHKIN SAID...
YOU'RE A TYRANT!
YOU TOLD ME TO DO AS I PLEASED... I HAVE MY OWN IDEA OF PLEASURE!

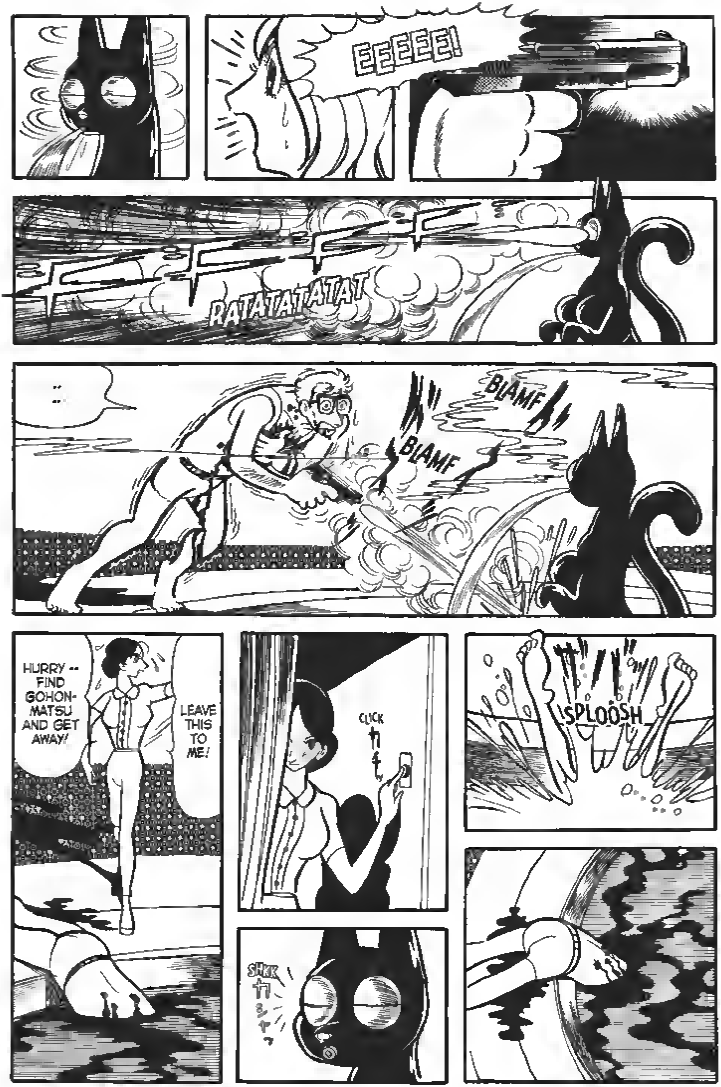

I'LL TEACH YOU THAT IT'S FAR BETTER FOR A WOMAN...
TO PLEASE A MAN.. GIVE BIRTH TO HIS CHILDREN... THAN *MEDDLE* RECKLESSLY IN WORLD AFFAIRS!
SHIT ...!
I WON'T BE ... *TRICKED* BY YOUR WILES, ZEPHYRUS ...!


AIEEE!
AARGH!
GYAH!
GRAAAH!
ORDERS FROM THE COMMANDER!
HRGHH!
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT CEASE THE INTERROGATION!
HE CALLED AND SAID, "GIVE HIM MEDICAL TREATMENT AND LET HIM GO!"
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
HUH? RELEASE HIM?

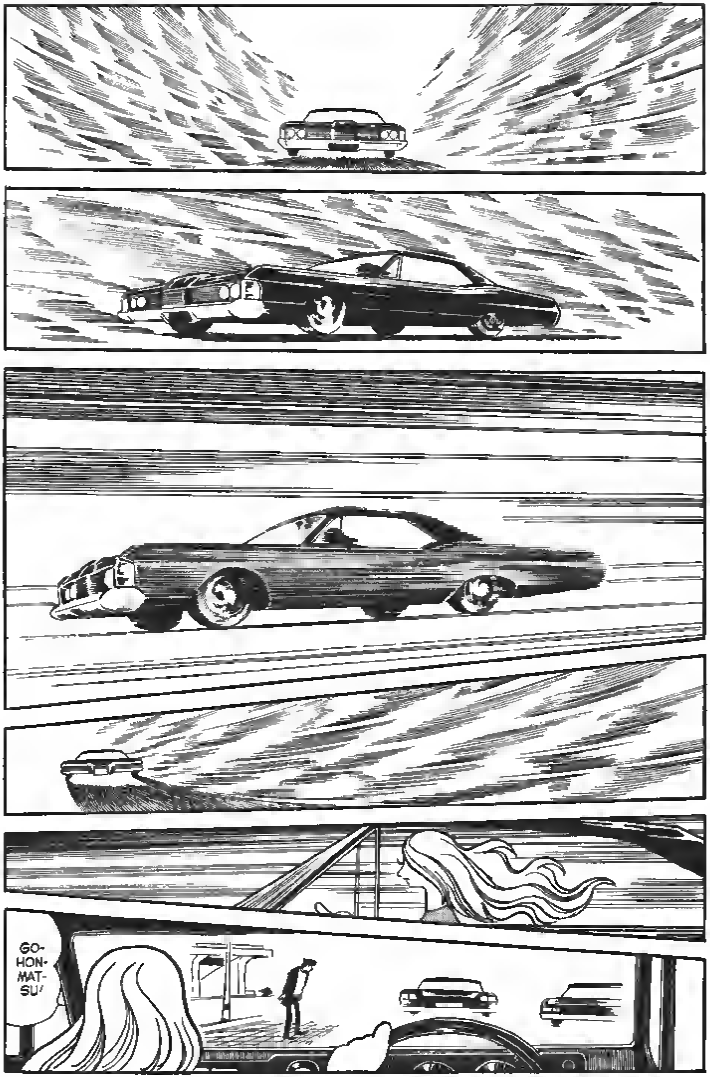
HAPPY..? I'VE DONE AS YOU ASKED
カチャ!! PACHAN
HA HA HA! HA HA HA.. HA
THANK YOU, COMMANDER.
I'M A GENEROUS MAN, YOU UNDERSTAND. IT'S NOTHING FOR ME TO LET ONE OR TWO OF YOUR MINIONS GO FREE
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
YES, I THOUGHT YOU'D EVENTUALLY COME AROUND TO IT AS A BARGAINING CONDITION
THIS HAS BEEN MY GOAL ALL ALONG!
YOU HAVE LOST!
LET GO! I'M GOING TO GOHONMATSU!
I WON'T LET YOU!
YOU'RE LEAVING ME?
THIS IS GOODBYE, THEN..
HE'S NOT A SUBORDINATE!
HEH HEH! A QUEEN GOING TO A LOWLY SUBORDINATE?

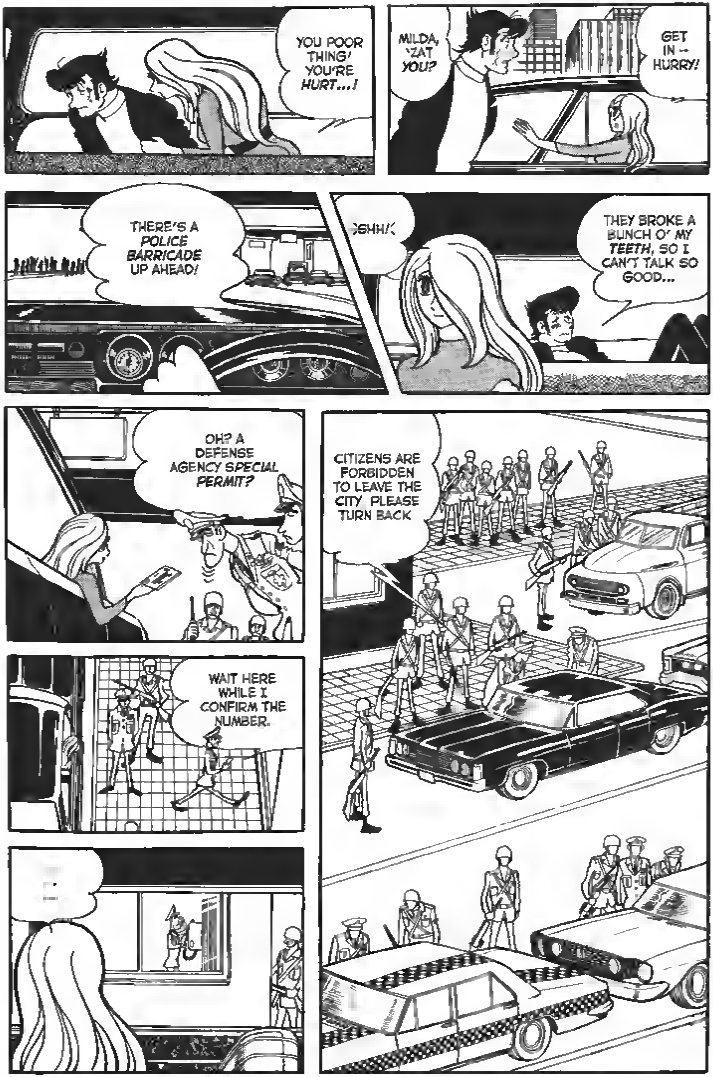
IM-POSSI-BLE...!
THEN WHAT...?
IT CAN'T BE!!
WITH GOHON-MATSU?!
I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
IT WAS FOR GOHONMATSU THAT I BETRAYED ZEPHYRUS.
IS THERE!
OH, AND ONE MORE THING. THE WOMAN YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING AND SLEEPING WITH EVERY NIGHT...
MILDA?
MY NAME IS MILDA.
YOU'RE MILDA?!

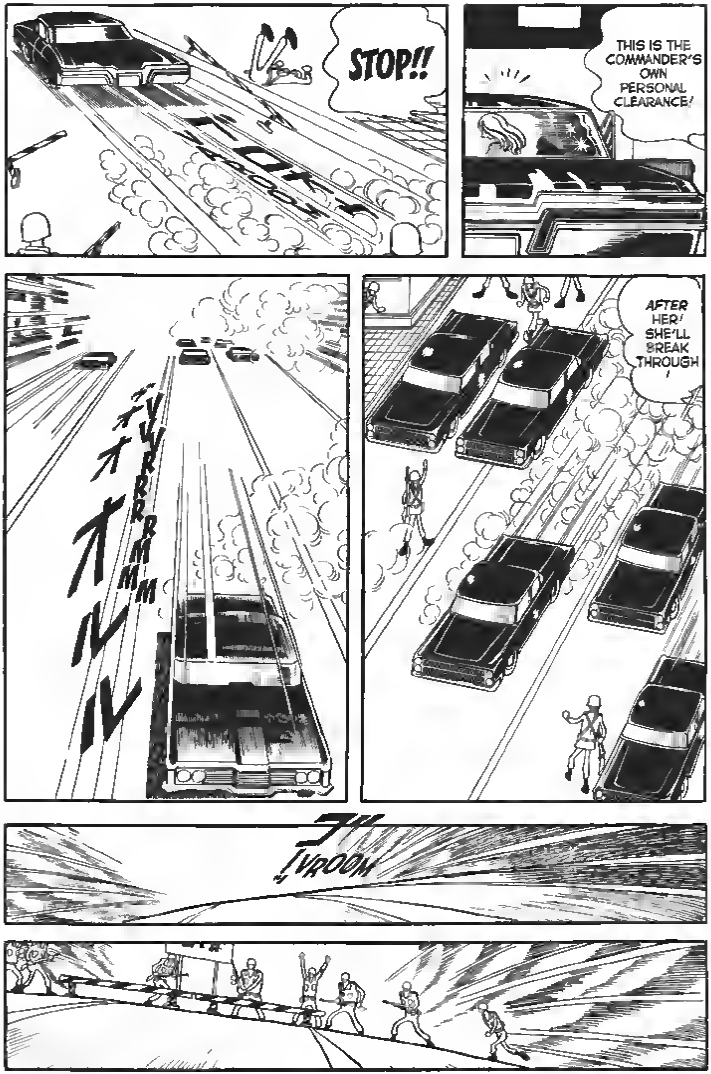

A DUMMY OF SYNTHETIC SKIN!
I'LL KILL YOU!
DAMN YOU... SO THAT'S IT!
I MIXED A HALLUCINOGEN IN WITH YOUR DRINKS, SO YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE...!
YOU!
I'LL KILL YOU!!
YOU... WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT..

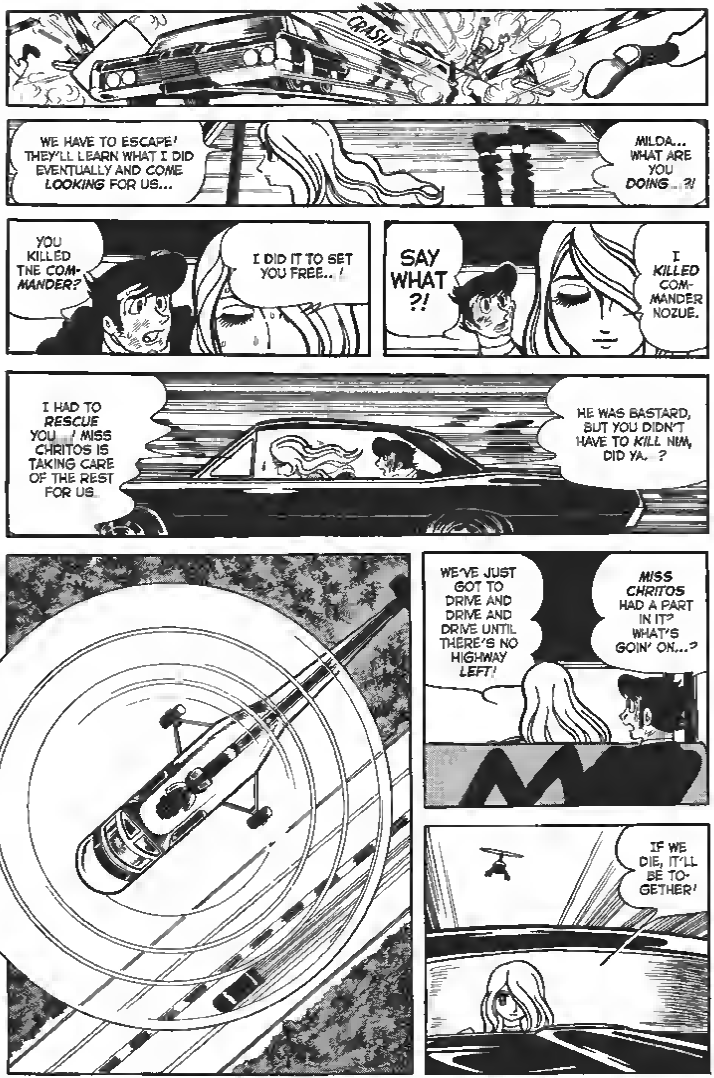

EEEEEE!
RATATATATATAT
BLAMF
BLAMF
HURRY -- FIND GOHON-MATSU AND GET AWAY!
LEAVE THIS TO ME!
CLICK
SPLOOSH
SHIK

WHEN YOU FIND GOHONMATSU... PLEASE... TELL HIM I SAID GOODBYE, ALL RIGHT...?
TAKE THIS!
QUICKLY NOW!
MISS CHRITOS... I CAN NEVER REPAY YOU!
I WILL!
IT'S FINALLY OVER!
VARROOMMM

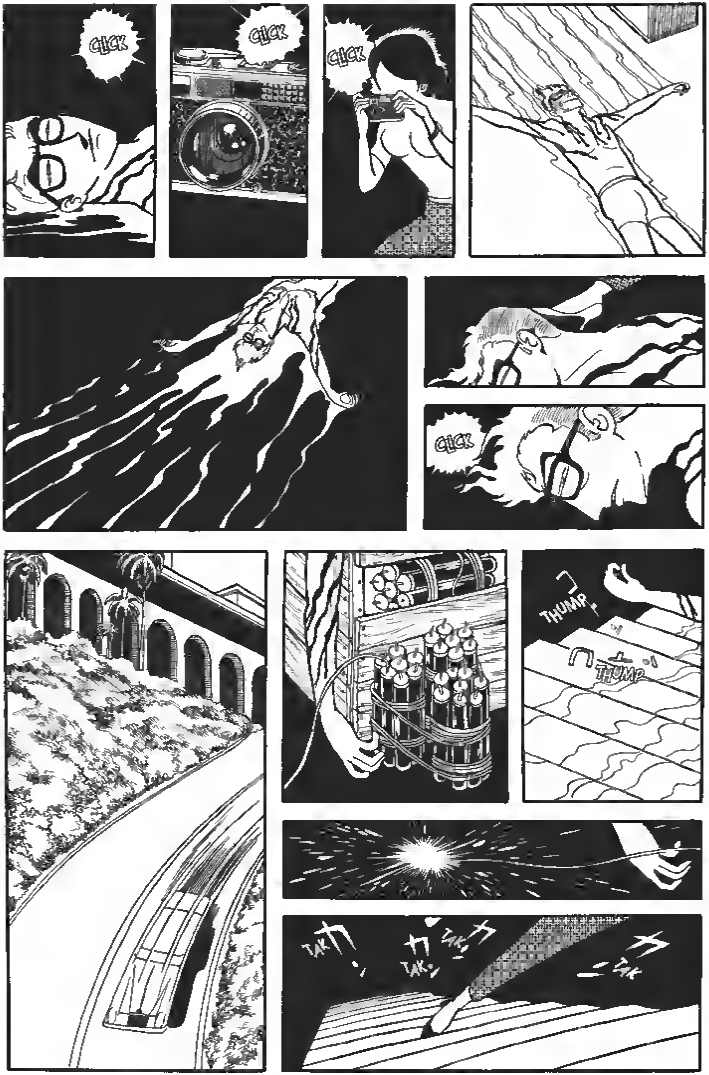

GO-
HON-
MAT-
SU!


YOU POOR THING! YOU'RE HURT...!
MILDA, 'ZAT YOU?
GET IN -- HURRY!
THERE'S A POLICE BARRICADE UP AHEAD!
JGHH!
THEY BROKE A BUNCH O' MY TEETH, SO I CAN'T TALK SO GOOD...
OH? A DEFENSE AGENCY SPECIAL PERMIT?
CITIZENS ARE FORBIDDEN TO LEAVE THE CITY. PLEASE TURN BACK
WAIT HERE WHILE I CONFIRM THE NUMBER.

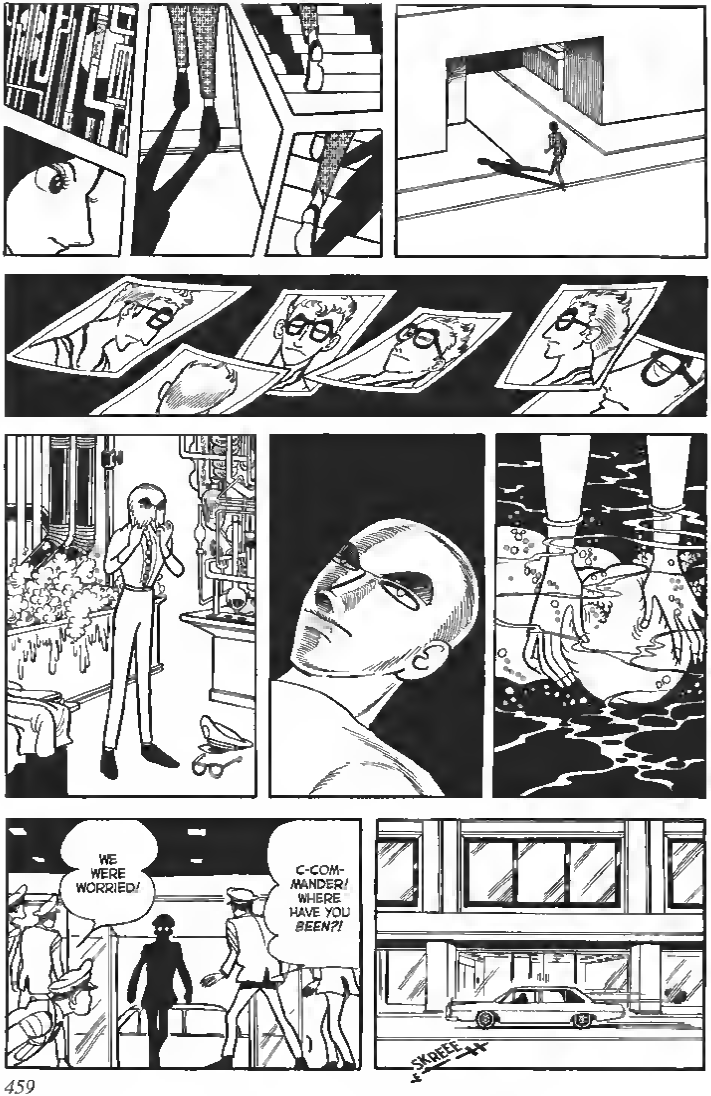

STOP!!
THIS IS THE COMMANDER'S OWN PERSONAL CLEARANCE!
オオオオオオ
VVRRRRMM
AFTER HER! SHE'LL BREAK THROUGH!
VROOM


CRASH
WE HAVE TO ESCAPE! THEY'LL LEARN WHAT I DID EVENTUALLY AND COME LOOKING FOR US...
MILDA... WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?!
YOU KILLED THE COMMANDER?
I DID IT TO SET YOU FREE...!
SAY WHAT?!
I KILLED COMMANDER NOZUE.
I HAD TO RESCUE YOU...! MISS CHRITOS IS TAKING CARE OF THE REST FOR US.
HE WAS BASTARD, BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM, DID YA...?
WE'VE JUST GOT TO DRIVE AND DRIVE AND DRIVE UNTIL THERE'S NO HIGHWAY LEFT!
MISS CHRITOS HAD A PART IN IT? WHAT'S GOIN' ON...?
IF WE DIE, IT'LL BE TOGETHER!

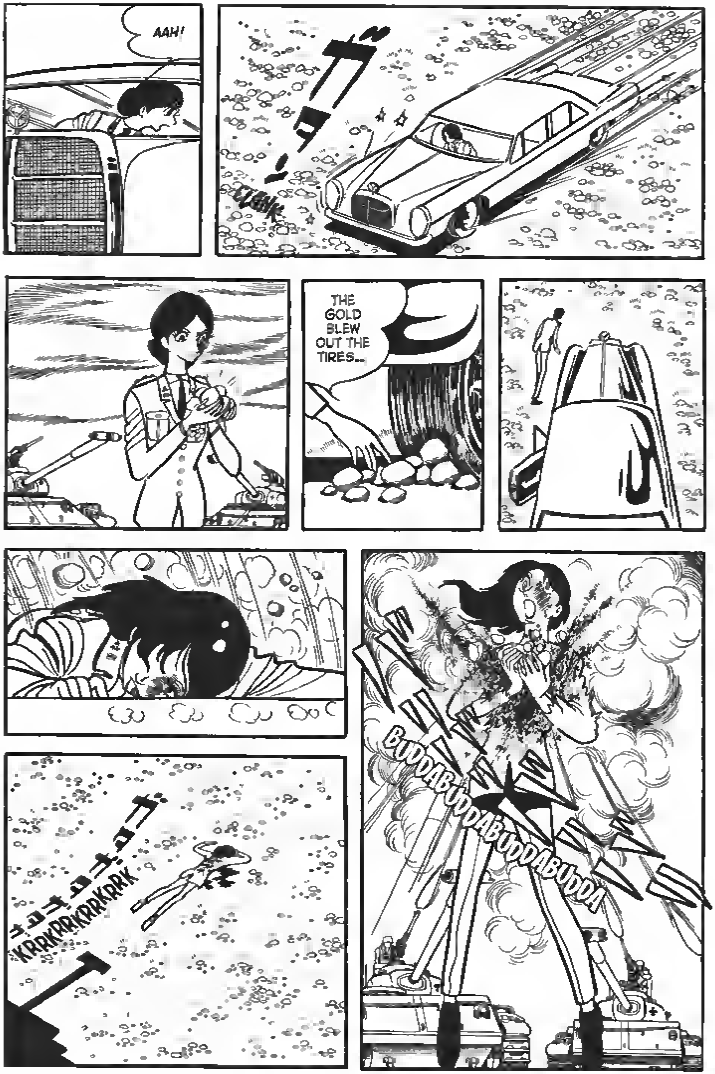
STOP THE CAR!
RATATAT
IF YOU DON'T STOP, WE WILL SHOOT!
OBEY OUR ORDERS AND GET OUT OF THE CAR, OR WE'LL DESTROY THE ENGINE!
MEANWHILE... AT THE MONTE CRISTOS RESIDENCE IN LIL...
AFTER MILDA LEFT, MISS CHRITOS BEGAN PERFORMING A STRANGE SERIES OF ACTIONS...

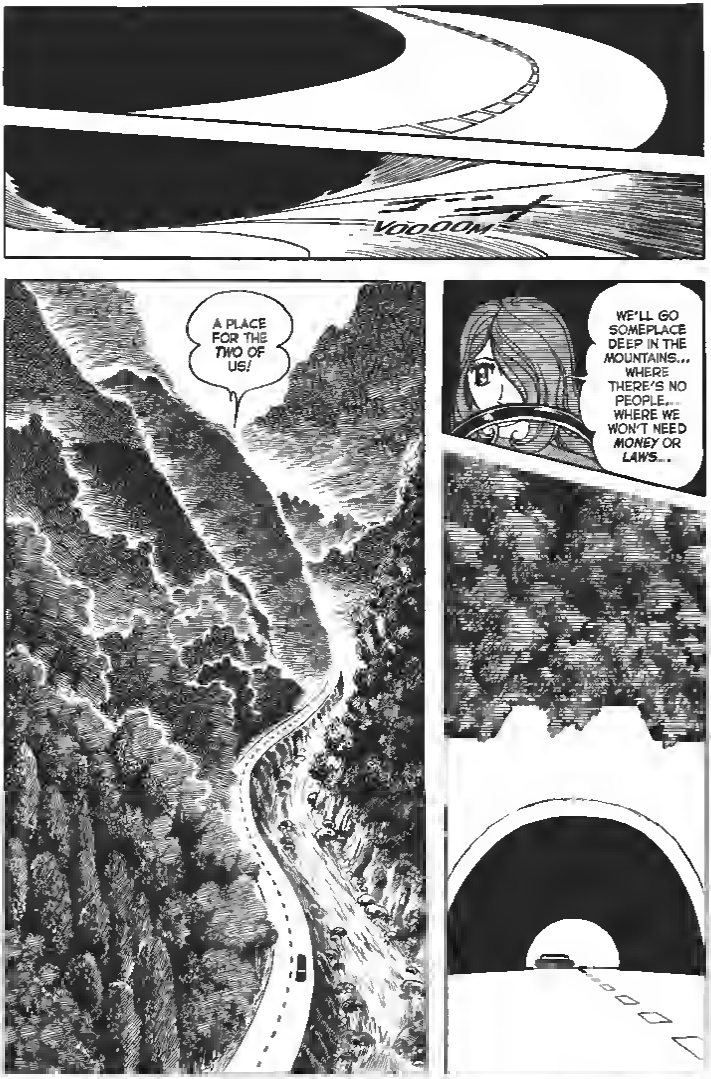

CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
THUMP
THUMP
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

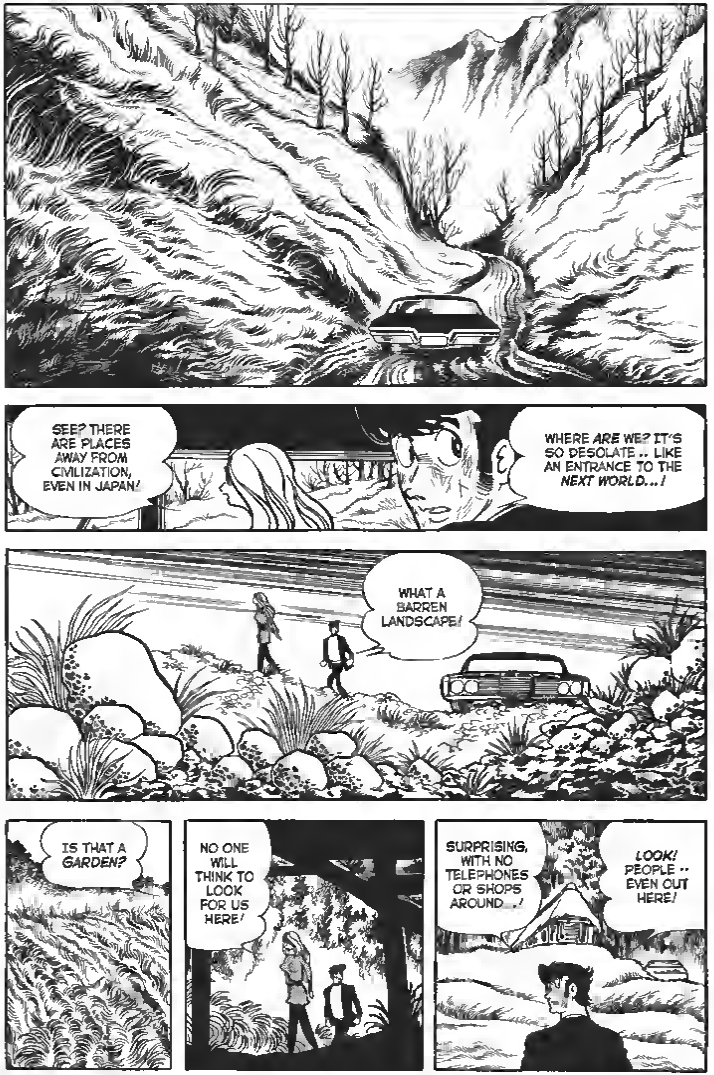
VOODOO
SKREEE
...
...


WE WERE WORRIED!
C-COM-MANDER! WHERE HAVE YOU *BEEN*?!
SKREEE

COME IN PATROL, THIS IS COMMAND. CEASE PURSUIT OF THE VEHICLE WITH SHINAGAWA PLATES. RETURN TO BASE AT ONCE -- OVER!
THAT'S AN ORDER!
CALL OFF THE PURSUIT! LET THEM GO!
WE'RE CURRENTLY PURSUING THEM, SIR..!
WHAT ABOUT THE TWO WHO BROKE THROUGH THE BARRICADE AND FLED NORTH?
GOHONMATSU! THE HELICOPTER'S TURNING AROUND!
..
BACK TO HEADQUARTERS, SIR?
I HOPE YOU ESCAPE SAFELY GOHONMATSU..


AAH!
SCREEEE
THE GOLD BLEW OUT THE TIRES...
KRRKRRKRRKRRKRK
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA


VOOOOM
A PLACE FOR THE *TWO* OF US!
WE'LL GO SOMEPLACE DEEP IN THE *MOUNTAINS*... WHERE THERE'S NO PEOPLE... WHERE WE WON'T NEED *MONEY* OR *LAWS*...


SEE? THERE ARE PLACES AWAY FROM CIVILIZATION, EVEN IN JAPAN!
WHERE *ARE* WE? IT'S SO DESOLATE .. LIKE AN ENTRANCE TO THE *NEXT WORLD...!*
WHAT A BARREN LANDSCAPE!
IS THAT A *GARDEN?*
NO ONE WILL THINK TO LOOK FOR US HERE!
SURPRISING, WITH NO TELEPHONES OR SHOPS AROUND...!
*LOOK!* PEOPLE .. EVEN OUT HERE!

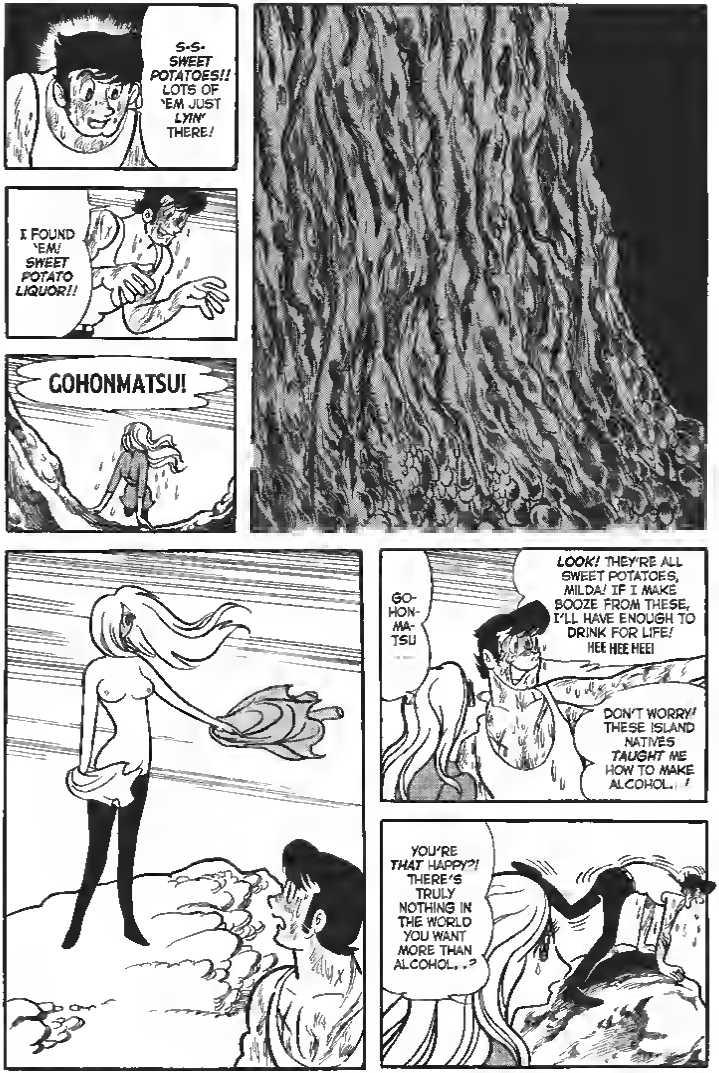
DON'T TOUCH THAT!
A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIELD...
WHAT THE...?
COME AGAIN?
DO YOU KNOW OF A PLACE TO LIVE AROUND HERE, MA'AM?
GET AWAY, YA TRES-PASSERS!
I SPENT TWO YEARS DIGGIN' THAT!
YA SAY Y'FOUND THIS PLACE AN' NOW YOU WANNA LIVE HERE?
DON'T GOT MUCH... DON'T EVEN GOT TEA, SO'S YA'LL HAVETA PUT UP WITH HOT WATER
I AIN'T EVEN HAD RICE BUT FIVE TIMES
I BEEN LIVIN' HERE NINETY-THREE YEARS..

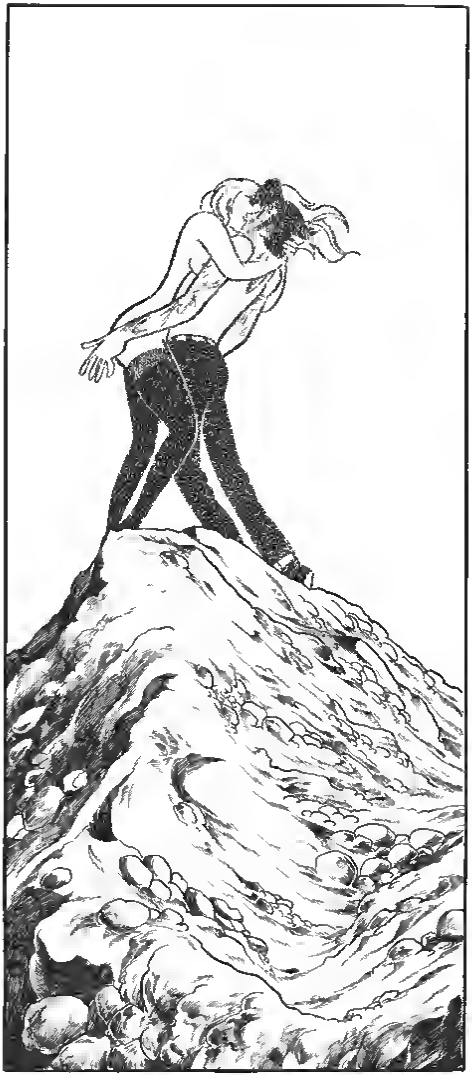
BOOZE, EH? HEH HEH HEH HEH!
ANY BOOZE?
IT'S A SMALL PATCH, BUT GOOD ENOUGH FOR EATS... I GROW LOTSA STUFF THERE
HERE. SOME MOUNTAIN BURDOCK I PICKED OUTTA THE PATCH
WELL, YA CAN LIVE IN THE HOUSE HERE, AN' TAKE OVER THE FIELD I WORKED ON... I'LL GIVE IT ALL TA YOU TWO.
HEIRS?
'CAUSE TODAY I FOUND MY HEIRS!
THIS STUFF'S FROM MOUNTAIN SWEET POTATOES! I HARDLY EVER BRING IT OUT, BUT THIS'S A SPECIAL OCCASION! HEH HEH HEH!
THIS'S THE WORST PLOT OF LAND I'VE EVER SEEN!
ARE YOU NUTS?! WHO'D WANNA LIVE IN A HOUSE LIKE THIS?
NOW I CAN FINALLY GO ON TA BE WITH MY HUSBAND I BEEN WORRIED ABOUT THE FIELD, SO I'M GLAD Y'ALL HAVE COME!
ALCOHOL? WE'VE GOT THAT! AND FOOD, AND A PLACE TO LIVE -- IT'S ALL HERE!
GOHONMATSU WHAT DOES HAPPINESS MEAN TO YOU?
BUT THE OLD WOMAN'S LIVED HERE NINETY-THREE YEARS!

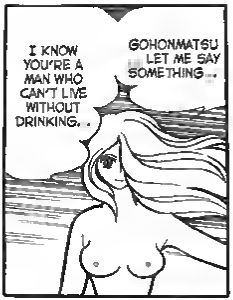
WELL, 'BOUT TIME FOR TH' BIG SLEEP..
YOU'LL HAVE ME HERE WITH YOU INSTEAD!
THE ONLY THING WE DON'T HAVE IS MONEY...!
YA OUGHTER BE HAPPY, HUBBY... HEIRS AT LAST!
HYUP
¸SIGH...< SO TIRED..
OLD LADY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
FOOSH
WELL... THAT'S IT, THEN!

HOW.. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO LIVE?!
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
DAMN IT../ IT CAN'T BE!
NOW I'M OUTTA BOOZE, TOO...
HMPH../ I WONDER HOW THE OLD LADY MADE THIS STUFF?
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY DO YOU LOOK SO UNHAPPY?
I'VE WAITED FOR THIS DAY... THIS MOMENT!
WE'RE ALONE, GOHON-MATSU!
GO-HON-MAT-SU!
I'LL CHECK IT OUT! MAYBE THERE'LL STILL BE SOME GROWING THERE!
LOOK, MILDA! IT SHOWS WHERE THE OLD WOMAN FOUND THOSE SWEET POTATOES! WHAT IF...?
OH! A MAP! THERE'S A MAP ON THE BOTTOM OF THE JUG!

GOHON-MATSU!
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH
HAAH
DAMN IT -- NOTHING! THE MAP WAS COMPLETELY WRONG!
MAYBE THE OLD LADY JUST GOT LUCKY AN' DUG OUT A COUPLE HERE ONCE ..?
HUH?!
THE MAP SAYS THEY'RE ON TOP OF THIS CLIFF... PROSPECTS DON'T LOOK GOOD, DO THEY?

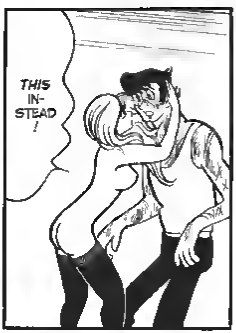

S-S-SWEET POTATOES!! LOTS OF 'EM JUST LYIN' THERE!
I FOUND 'EM! SWEET POTATO LIQUOR!!
GOHONMATSU!
GO-HON-MA-TSU
LOOK! THEY'RE ALL SWEET POTATOES, MILDA! IF I MAKE BOOZE FROM THESE, I'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO DRINK FOR LIFE! HEE HEE HEE!
DON'T WORRY! THESE ISLAND NATIVES TAUGHT ME HOW TO MAKE ALCOHOL.
YOU'RE THAT HAPPY?! THERE'S TRULY NOTHING IN THE WORLD YOU WANT MORE THAN ALCOHOL..?




I KNOW YOU'RE A MAN WHO CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT DRINKING..
GOHONMATSU LET ME SAY SOMETHING...

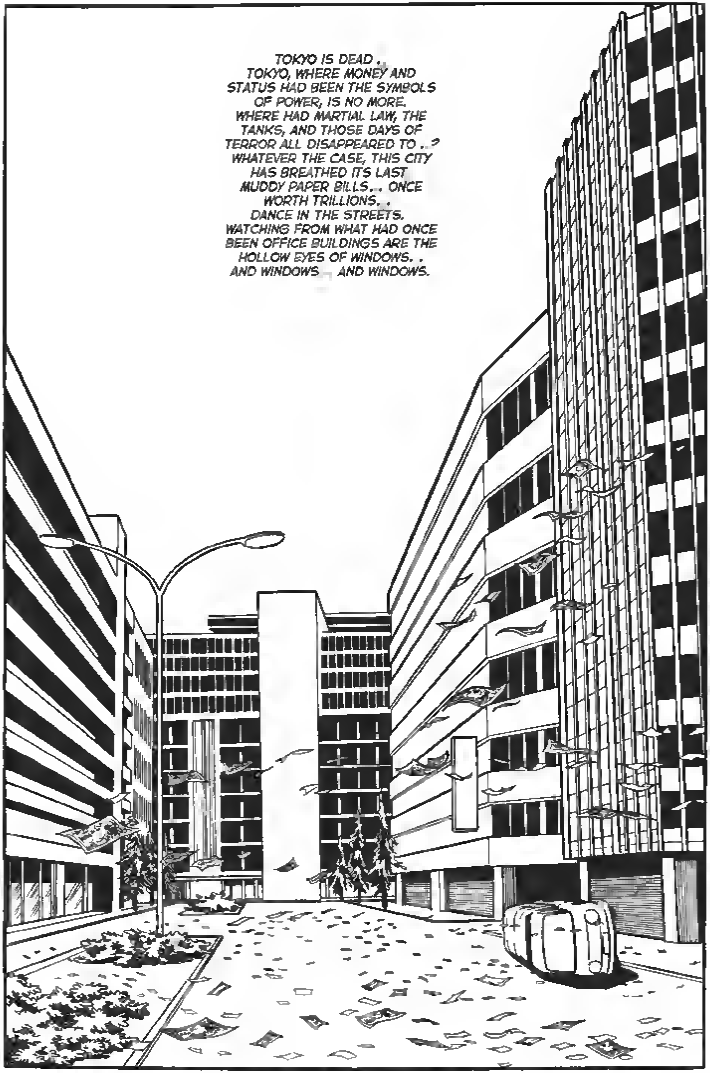
IF YOU CAN BE HAPPY HERE LIKE THIS. THEN I WON'T EVER KEEP YOU FROM IT...

BUT.. JUST ONCE... I WANT YOU TO TRY..

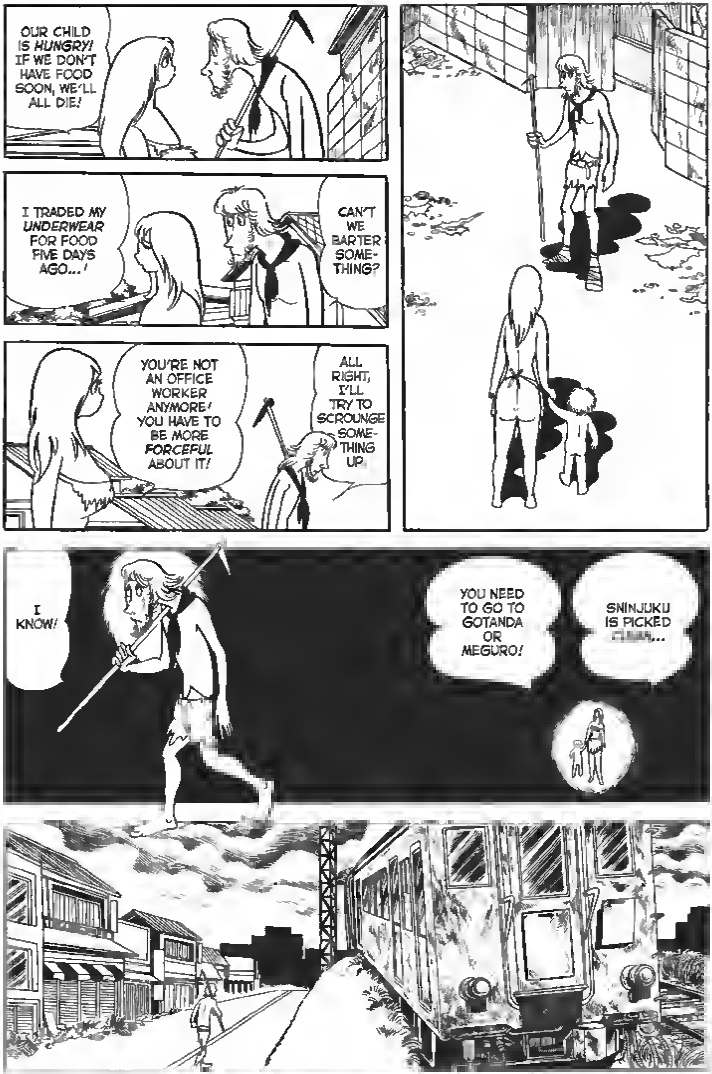

THIS IN-STEAD!

CHAPTER 19

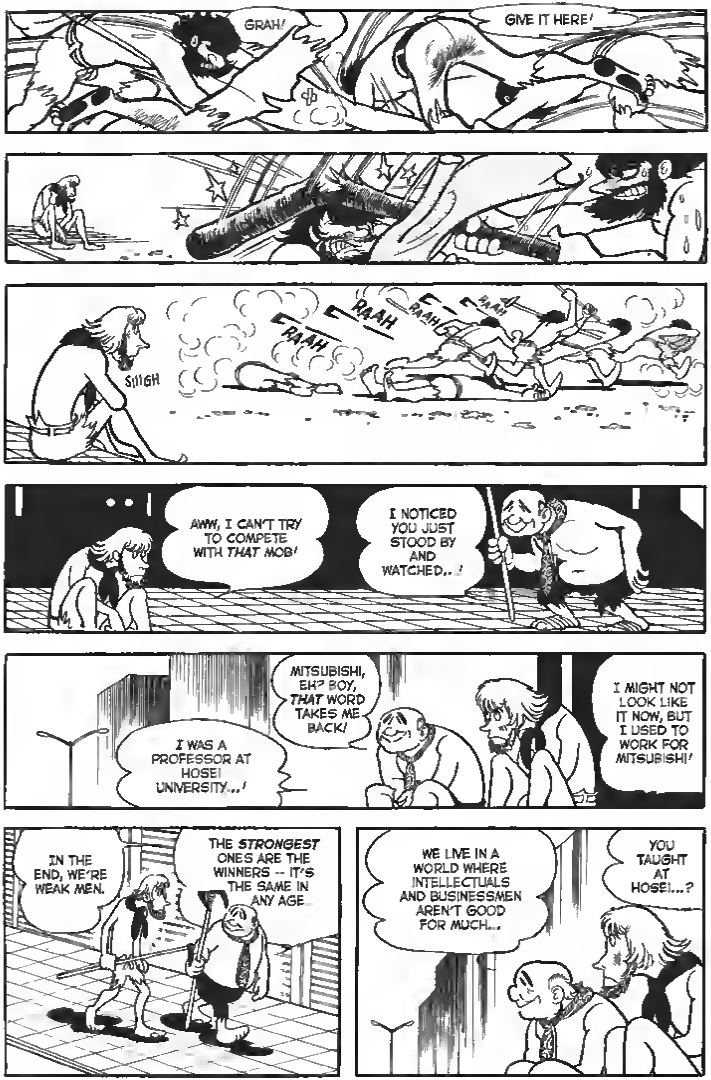
# PRESTO PATHETIQUE

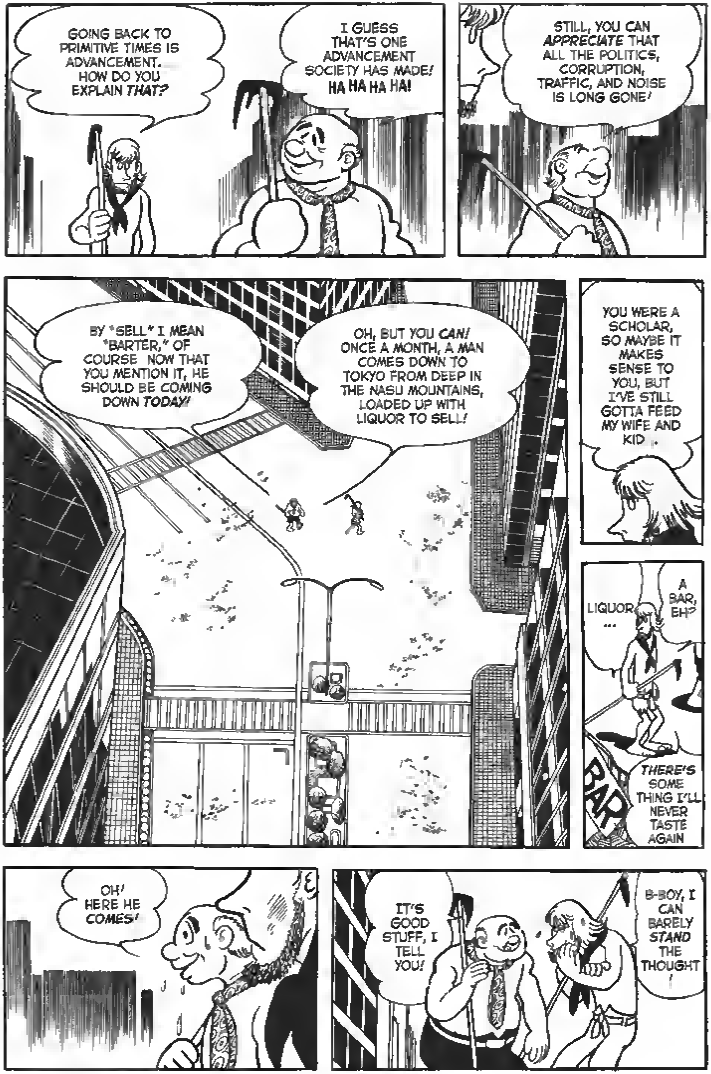

TOKYO IS DEAD.
TOKYO, WHERE MONEY AND STATUS HAD BEEN THE SYMBOLS OF POWER, IS NO MORE.
WHERE HAD MARTIAL LAW, THE TANKS, AND THOSE DAYS OF TERROR ALL DISAPPEARED TO..?
WHATEVER THE CASE, THIS CITY HAS BREATHED IT'S LAST.
MUDDY PAPER BILLS... ONCE WORTH TRILLIONS..
DANCE IN THE STREETS.
WATCHING FROM WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN OFFICE BUILDINGS ARE THE HOLLOW EYES OF WINDOWS..
AND WINDOWS... AND WINDOWS.

CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
MAMA...
YET, IN UPPER AND LOWER PART'S OF THE CITY, PEOPLE STILL RESIDE, THINLY SCATTERED AND CLINGING TO LIFE.

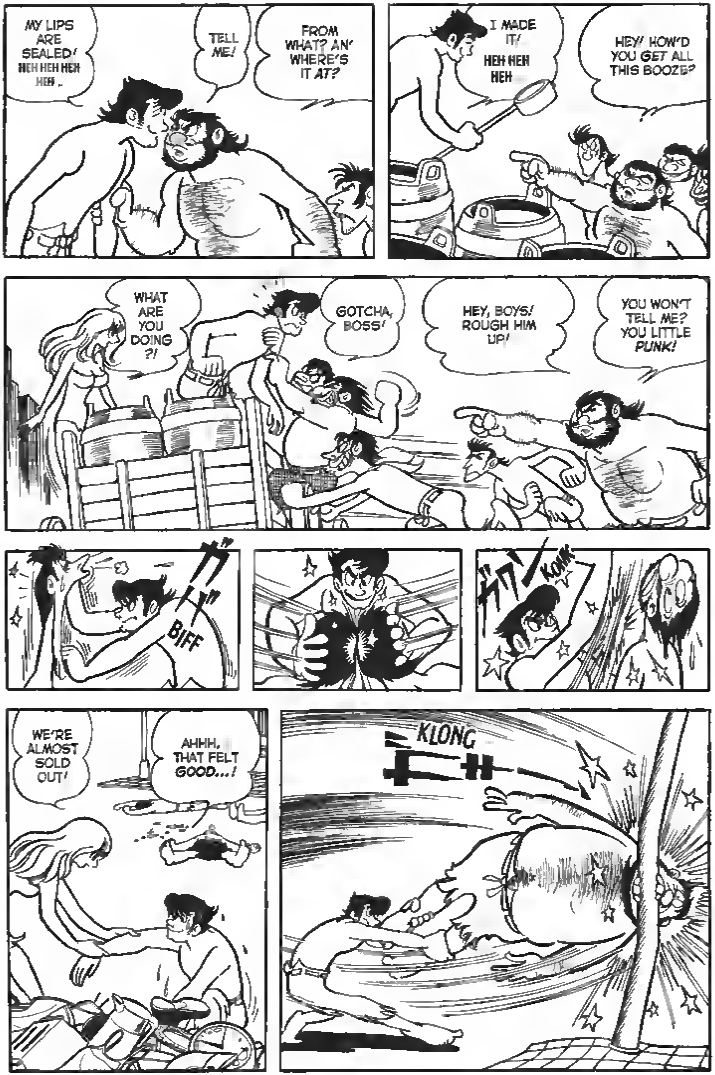

OUR CHILD IS HUNGRY! IF WE DON'T HAVE FOOD SOON, WE'LL ALL DIE!
I TRADED MY UNDERWEAR FOR FOOD FIVE DAYS AGO...!
CAN'T WE BARTER SOMETHING?
YOU'RE NOT AN OFFICE WORKER ANYMORE! YOU HAVE TO BE MORE FORCEFUL ABOUT IT!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TRY TO SCROUNGE SOMETHING UP.
I KNOW!
YOU NEED TO GO TO GOTANDA OR MEGURO!
SHINJUKU IS PICKED

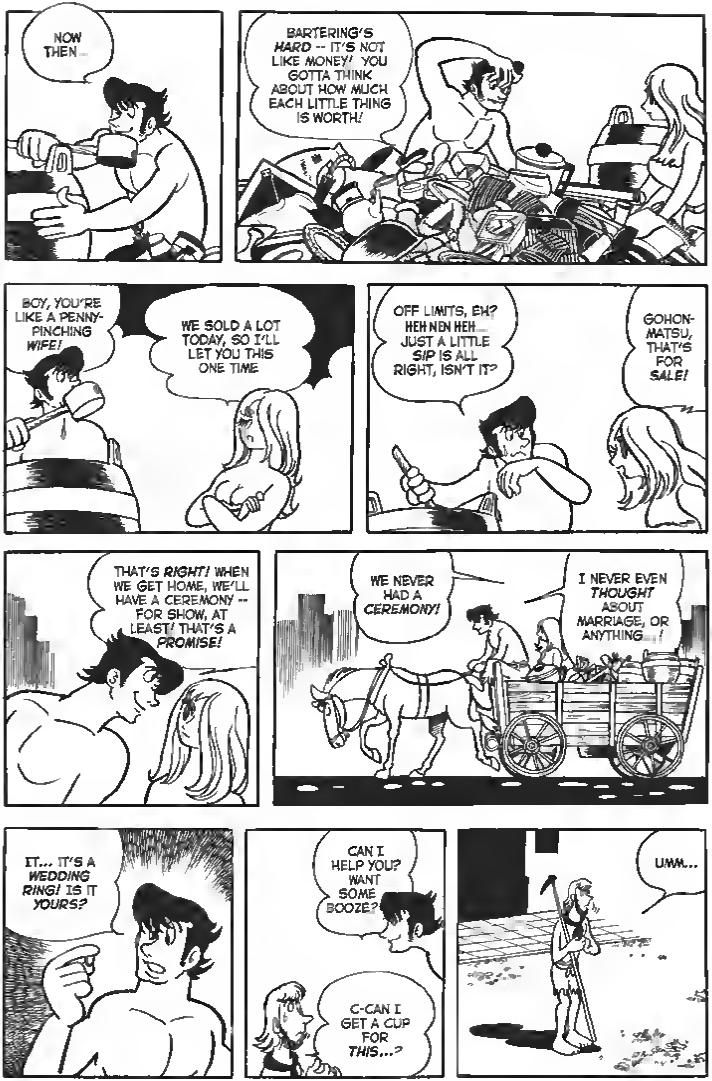
CLOTHES!
HEY! DOWN THERE...
NO YOU DIDN'T, I DID!
I SAW IT FIRST!
A JACKET!
CLOTHES!

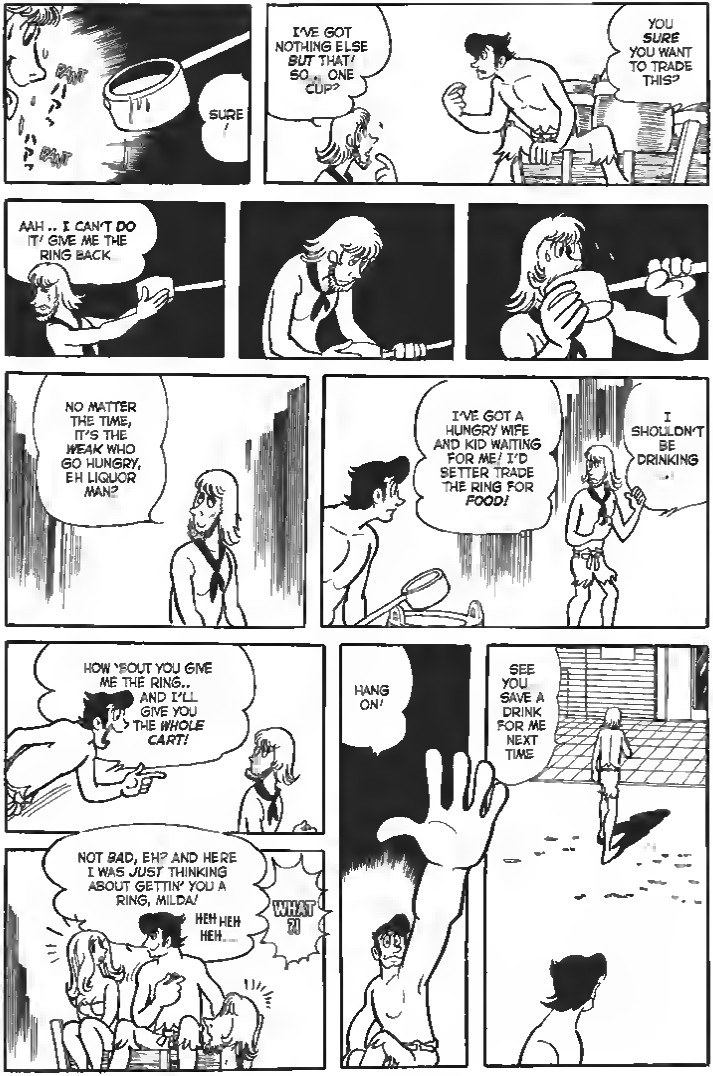

GRAH!
GIVE IT HERE!
SIIIGH
RAAH
RAAH
RAAH
RAAH
AWW, I CAN'T TRY TO COMPETE WITH *THAT* MOB!
I NOTICED YOU JUST STOOD BY AND WATCHED..!
I WAS A PROFESSOR AT HOSEI UNIVERSITY...!
MITSUBISHI, EH? BOY, *THAT* WORD TAKES ME BACK!
I MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE IT NOW, BUT I USED TO WORK FOR MITSUBISHI!
IN THE END, WE'RE WEAK MEN.
THE *STRONGEST* ONES ARE THE WINNERS -- IT'S THE SAME IN ANY AGE.
WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE INTELLECTUALS AND BUSINESSMEN AREN'T GOOD FOR MUCH...
YOU TAUGHT AT HOSEI...?

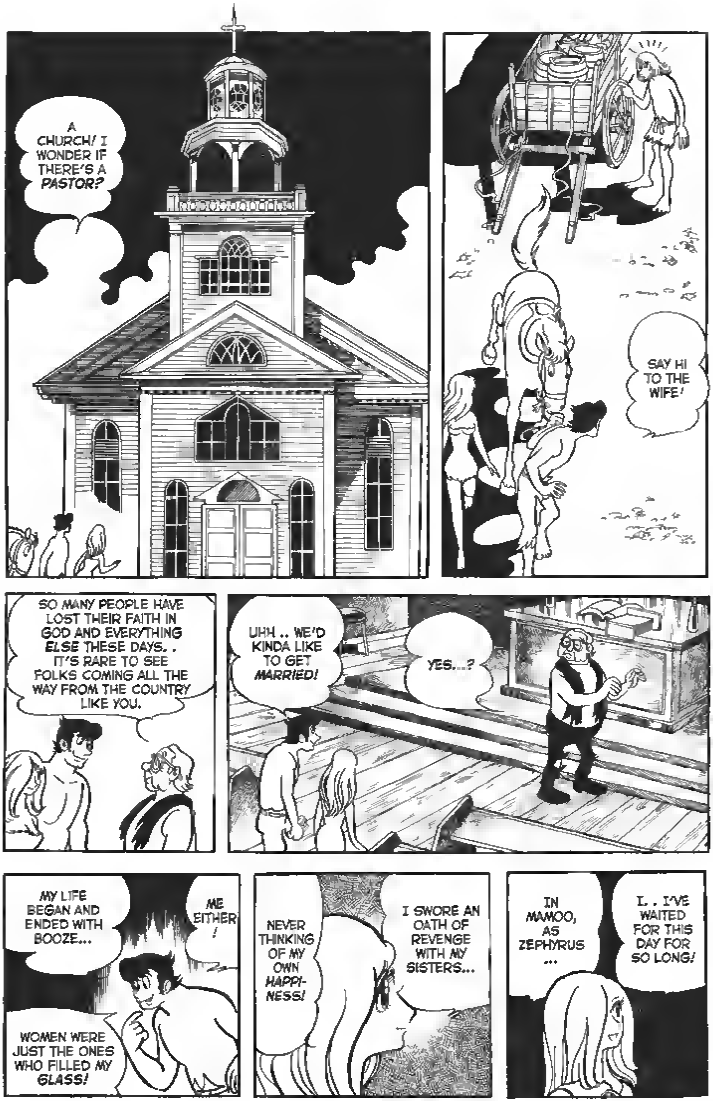

GOING BACK TO PRIMITIVE TIMES IS ADVANCEMENT. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN *THAT?*
I GUESS THAT'S ONE ADVANCEMENT SOCIETY HAS MADE! HA HA HA HA!
STILL, YOU CAN *APPRECIATE* THAT ALL THE POLITICS, CORRUPTION, TRAFFIC, AND NOISE IS LONG GONE!
BY "SELL" I MEAN "BARTER," OF COURSE. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, HE SHOULD BE COMING DOWN *TODAY!*
OH, BUT YOU *CAN!* ONCE A MONTH, A MAN COMES DOWN TO TOKYO FROM DEEP IN THE NASU MOUNTAINS, LOADED UP WITH LIQUOR TO SELL!
YOU WERE A SCHOLAR, SO MAYBE IT MAKES SENSE TO YOU, BUT I'VE STILL GOTTA FEED MY WIFE AND KID.
LIQUOR ...
A BAR, EH?
RAP
*THERE'S* SOME THING I'LL NEVER TASTE AGAIN
OH! HERE HE *COMES!*
IT'S GOOD STUFF, I TELL YOU!
B-BOY, I CAN BARELY *STAND* THE THOUGHT!

KAGOP
カラガラガラ
KAGOP
KAGOP
KAGOP
THE BOOZE IS NERE!
BOOZE! BOOZE!!
I'VE GOT THIS CLOCK! IT DOESN'T WORK, BUT...
I'LL TRADE A LADLE FULL FOR THESE CLOTHES!
STEP RIGHT UP! YOU ALL WANT BOOZE, DON'TCHA? WELL HERE IT IS! EXCEPTIONAL, NIGH QUALITY STUFF!
HOW MUCH CAN I GET FOR ONE SHOE?
PLEASE! JUST ONE CUP ON CREDIT!
MY SHIRT AND DRAWERS!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU, SIR!

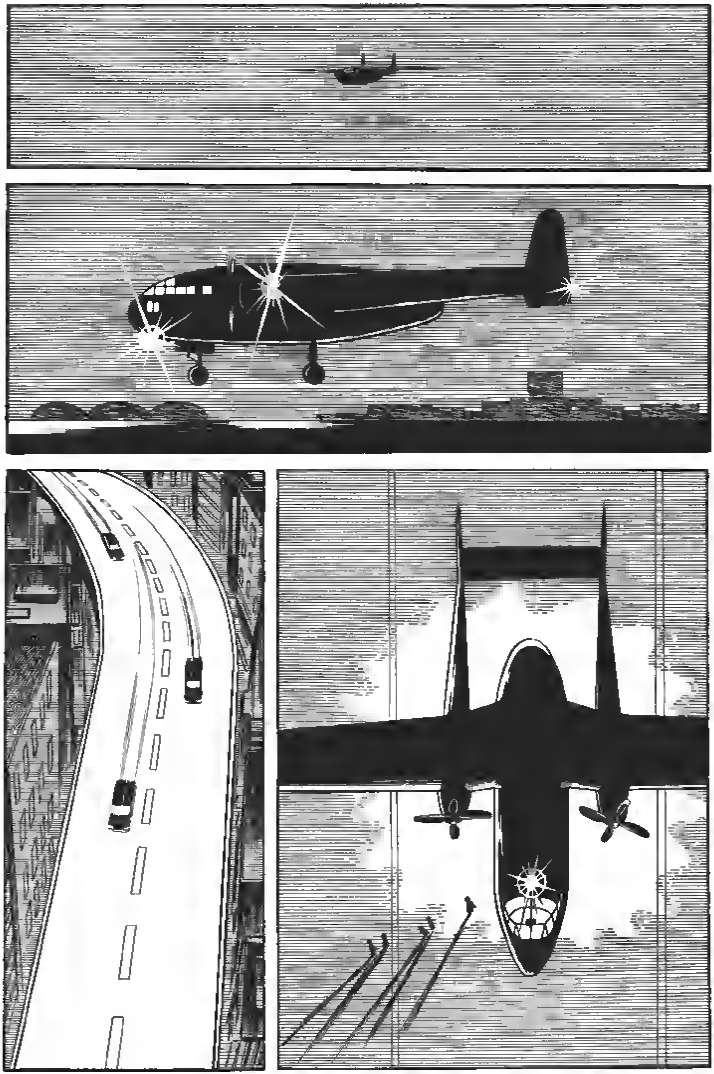

MY LIPS ARE SEALED! HEH HEH HEH HEH.
TELL ME!
FROM WHAT? AN' WHERE'S IT AT?
I MADE IT! HEH HEH HEH
HEY! HOW'D YOU GET ALL THIS BOOZE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
GOTCHA, BOSS!
HEY, BOYS! ROUGH HIM UP!
YOU WON'T TELL ME? YOU LITTLE PUNK!
BIFF
KONK
WE'RE ALMOST SOLD OUT!
AHHH, THAT FELT GOOD...!
KLONG

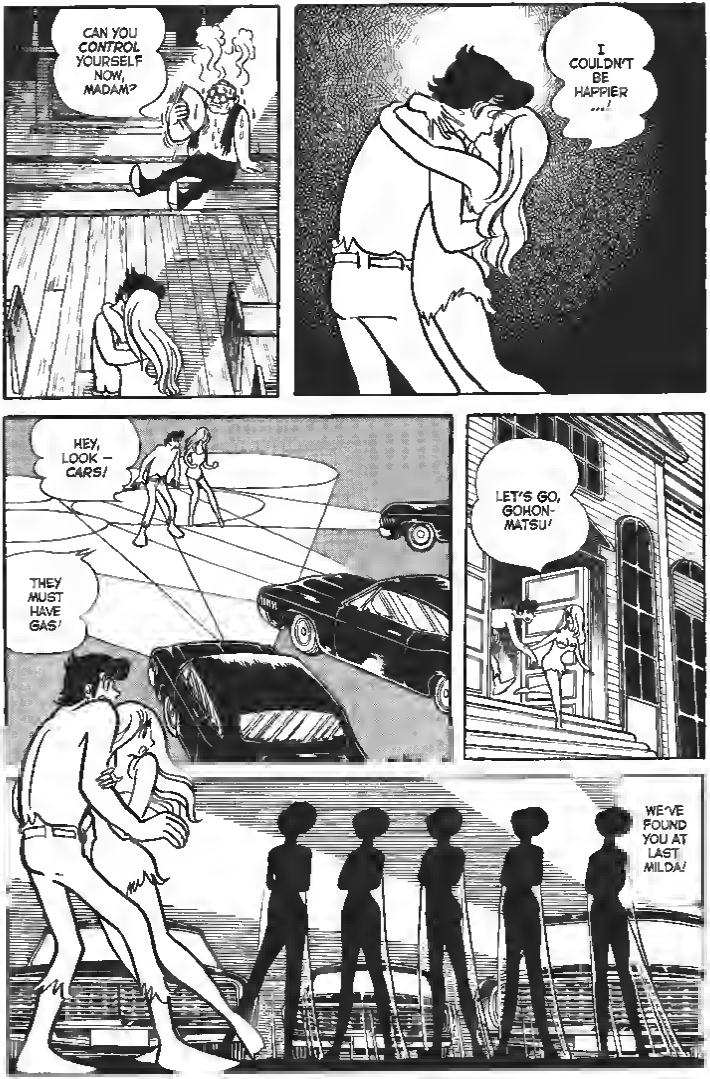

NOW THEN...
BARTERING'S *HARD* -- IT'S NOT LIKE MONEY! YOU GOTTA THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH EACH LITTLE THING IS WORTH!
BOY, YOU'RE LIKE A PENNY-PINCHING *WIFE!*
WE SOLD A LOT TODAY, SO I'LL LET YOU THIS ONE TIME
OFF LIMITS, EH? HEH HEH HEH... JUST A LITTLE *SIP* IS ALL RIGHT, ISN'T IT?
GOHON-MATSU, THAT'S FOR *SALE!*
THAT'S *RIGHT!* WHEN WE GET HOME, WE'LL HAVE A CEREMONY -- FOR SHOW, AT LEAST! THAT'S A *PROMISE!*
WE NEVER HAD A *CEREMONY!*
I NEVER EVEN *THOUGHT* ABOUT MARRIAGE, OR ANYTHING...!
IT... IT'S A *WEDDING RING!* IS IT *YOURS?*
CAN I HELP YOU? WANT SOME BOOZE?
C-CAN I GET A CUP FOR *THIS...?*
UMM...

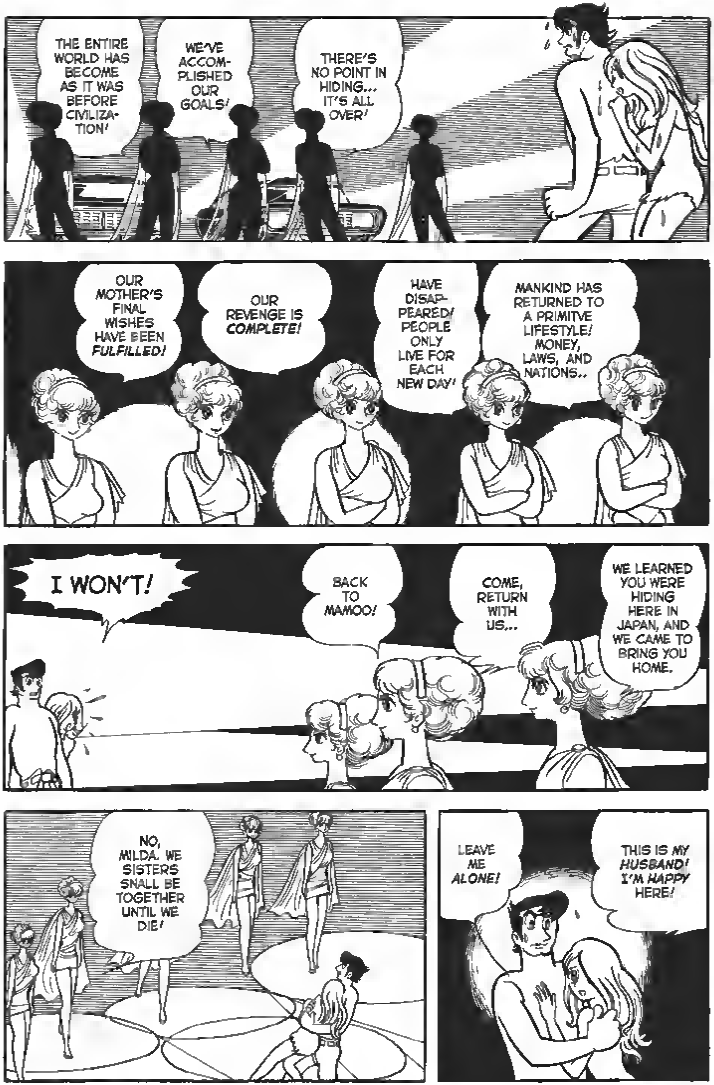

PAINT
PAINT
SURE
I'VE GOT NOTHING ELSE BUT THAT! SO... ONE CUP?
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO TRADE THIS?
AAH .. I CAN'T DO IT! GIVE ME THE RING BACK
NO MATTER THE TIME, IT'S THE WEAK WHO GO HUNGRY, EH LIQUOR MAN?
I'VE GOT A HUNGRY WIFE AND KID WAITING FOR ME! I'D BETTER TRADE THE RING FOR FOOD!
I SHOULDN'T BE DRINKING
HOW 'BOUT YOU GIVE ME THE RING.. AND I'LL GIVE YOU THE WHOLE CART!
NOT BAD, EH? AND HERE I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT GETTIN' YOU A RING, MILDA!
HEH HEH HEH...
WHAT?!
HANG ON!
SEE YOU SAVE A DRINK FOR ME NEXT TIME

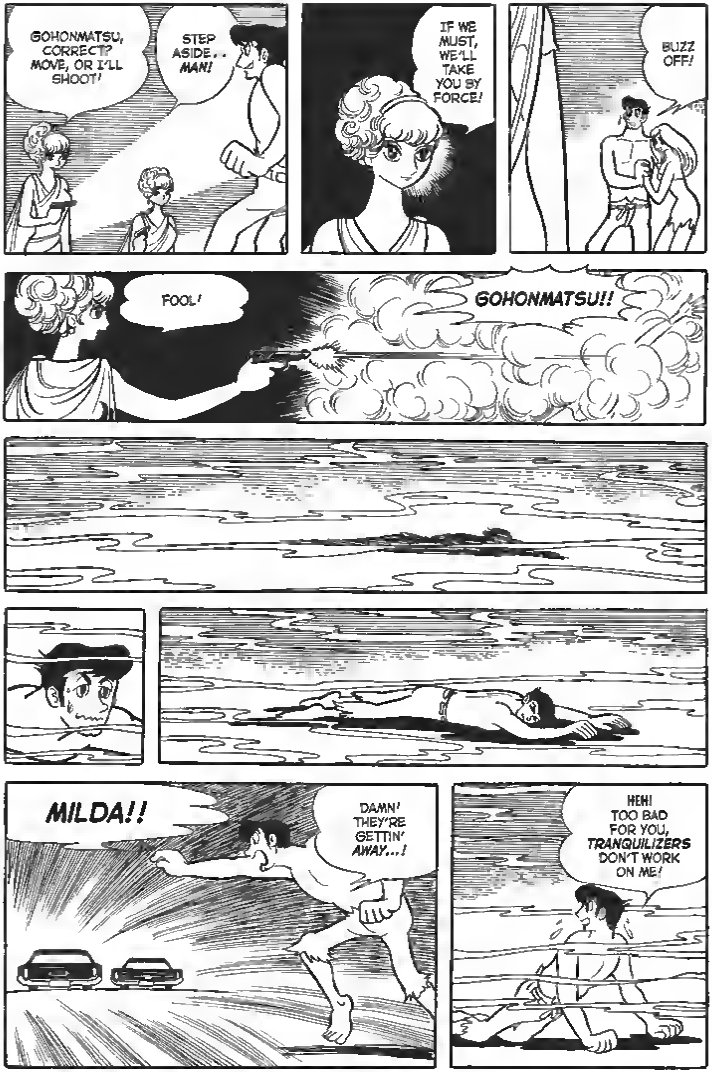

A CHURCH! I WONDER IF THERE'S A PASTOR?
SAY HI TO THE WIFE!
SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE LOST THEIR FAITH IN GOD AND EVERYTHING ELSE THESE DAYS.. IT'S RARE TO SEE FOLKS COMING ALL THE WAY FROM THE COUNTRY LIKE YOU.
UHH .. WE'D KINDA LIKE TO GET MARRIED!
YES...?
MY LIFE BEGAN AND ENDED WITH BOOZE...
ME EITHER!
WOMEN WERE JUST THE ONES WHO FILLED MY GLASS!
NEVER THINKING OF MY OWN HAPPINESS!
I SWORE AN OATH OF REVENGE WITH MY SISTERS...
IN MAMOO, AS ZEPHYRUS ...
I.. I'VE WAITED FOR THIS DAY FOR SO LONG!

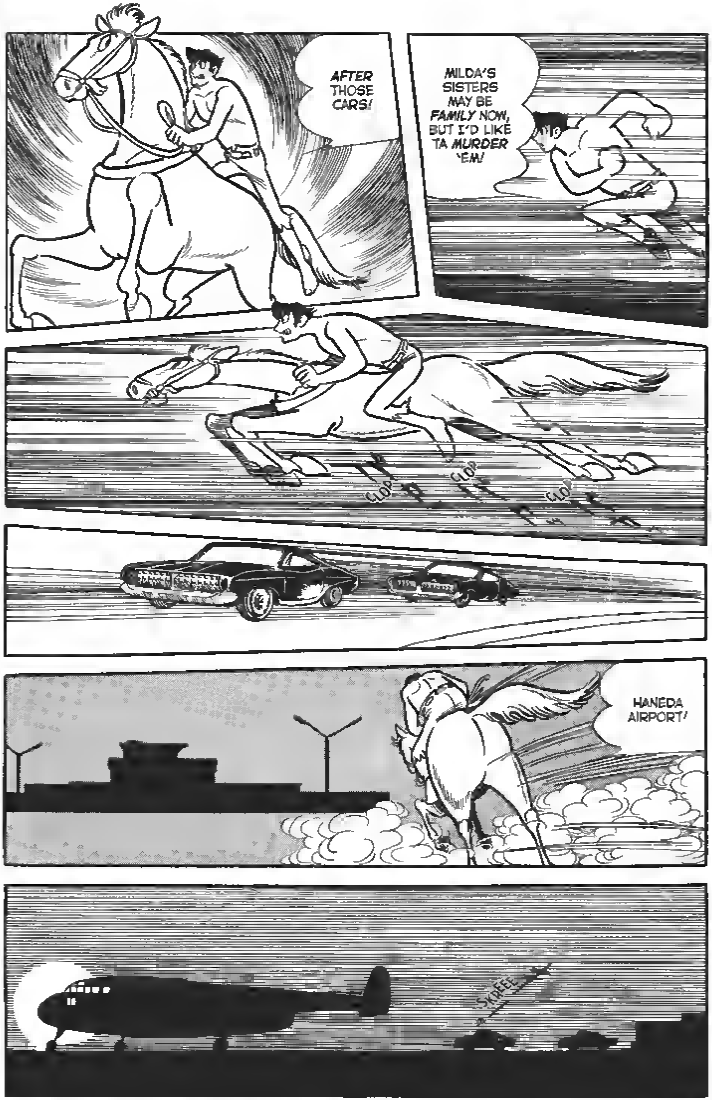
STAND TOGETHER HERE, PLEASE
I SWEAR
GOHONMATSU SEKI. . DO YOU SWEAR TO TAKE MILDA AS YOUR WIFE. . TO LOVE AND SUPPORT HER AS LONG AS YOU BOTH SHALL LIVE?
YOU HAVE A RING, I SEE!
ELECTRICITY, PLUMBING, FUEL SUPPLIES -- ALL GONE. . A DEAD METROPOLIS. . LOOKING FROM ABOVE LIKE A PITCH BLACK JUNGLE. THEN, A ROAR — A CARGO PLANE! WHERE HAS IS COME FROM? WHY HAS IT COME TO TOKYO?
MILDA, DO YOU SWEAR TO TAKE GOHON-MATSU AS
WAIT! THERE'S NO KISSING YET!!

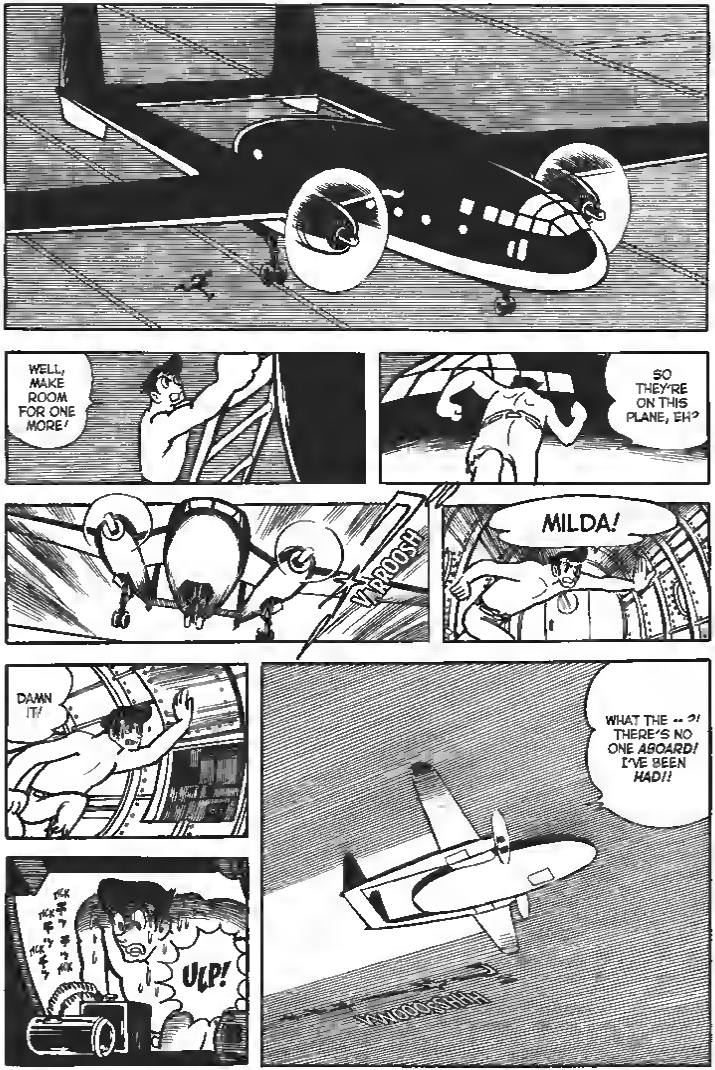



CAN YOU CONTROL YOURSELF NOW, MADAM?
I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER ...!
HEY, LOOK – CARS!
THEY MUST HAVE GAS!
LET'S GO, GOHON-MATSU!
WE'VE FOUND YOU AT LAST, MILDA!


THE ENTIRE WORLD HAS BECOME AS IT WAS BEFORE CIVILIZATION!
WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED OUR GOALS!
THERE'S NO POINT IN HIDING... IT'S ALL OVER!
OUR MOTHER'S FINAL WISHES HAVE BEEN FULFILLED!
OUR REVENGE IS COMPLETE!
HAVE DISAPPEARED! PEOPLE ONLY LIVE FOR EACH NEW DAY!
MANKIND HAS RETURNED TO A PRIMITVE LIFESTYLE! MONEY, LAWS, AND NATIONS...
I WON'T!
BACK TO MAMOO!
COME, RETURN WITH US...
WE LEARNED YOU WERE HIDING HERE IN JAPAN, AND WE CAME TO BRING YOU HOME.
NO, MILDA. WE SISTERS SHALL BE TOGETHER UNTIL WE DIE!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
THIS IS MY HUSBAND! I'M HAPPY HERE!

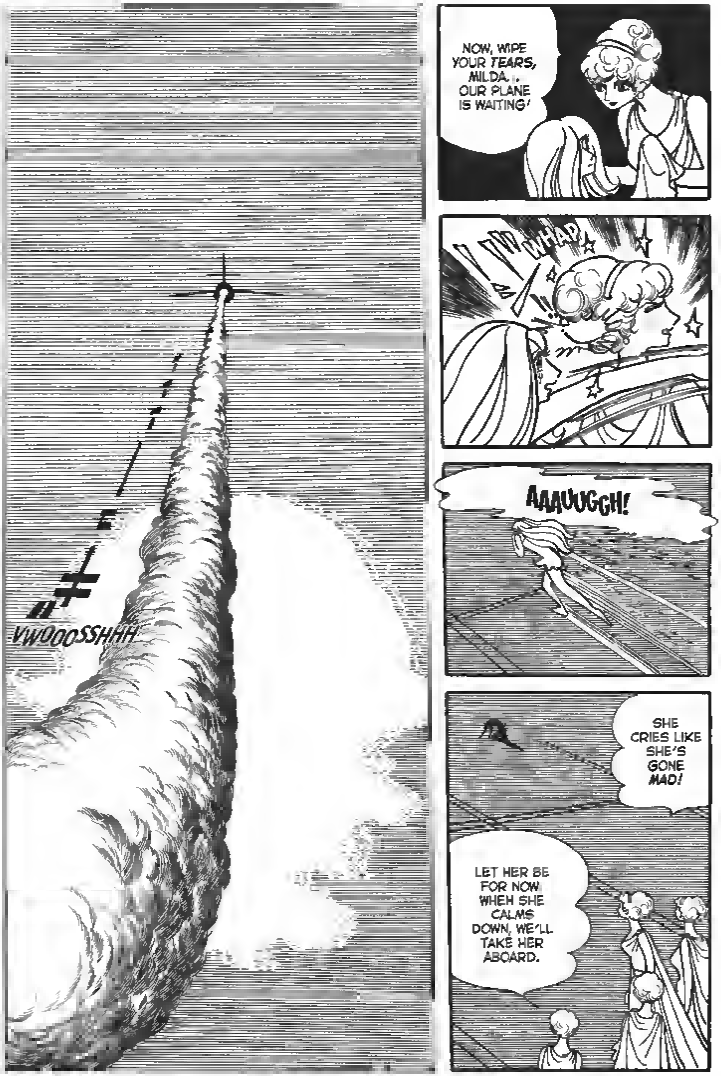

GOHONMATSU, CORRECT? MOVE, OR I'LL SHOOT!
STEP ASIDE... MAN!
IF WE MUST, WE'LL TAKE YOU BY FORCE!
BUZZ OFF!
FOOL!
GOHONMATSU!!
MILDA!!
DAMN! THEY'RE GETTIN' AWAY...!
HEH! TOO BAD FOR YOU, TRANQUILIZERS DON'T WORK ON ME!


AFTER THOSE CARS!
MILDA'S SISTERS MAY BE FAMILY NOW, BUT I'D LIKE TA MURDER 'EM!
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
HANEDA AIRPORT!
SKREE


WELL, MAKE ROOM FOR ONE MORE!
SO THEY'RE ON THIS PLANE, EH?
MILDA!
WHOOSH
DAMN IT!
WHAT THE -- ?! THERE'S NO ONE ABOARD! I'VE BEEN HAD!!
ULP!

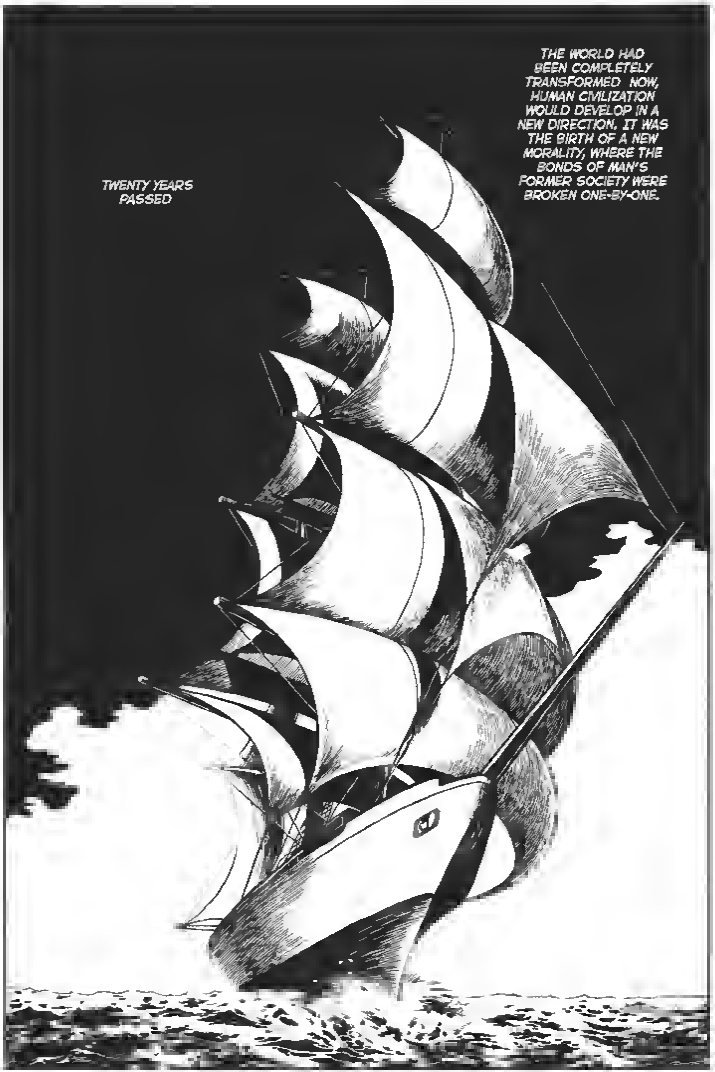
KRAKABOOOMM

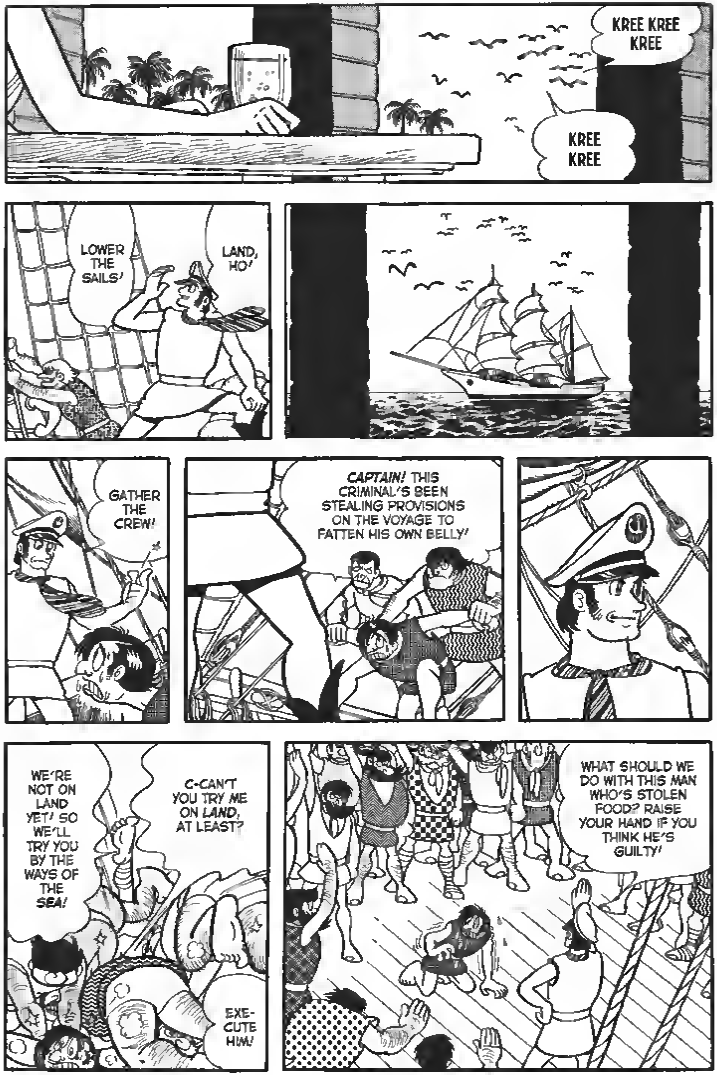
SO, MILDA... THE CURTAIN CLOSES ON YOUR GLORIOUS LOVE!
GOHON-MATSU
WHY... WHY DID YOU KILL HIM...? WHY HAVE YOU TAKEN EVERY-THING FROM ME?!
TAKEN? IT WAS THAT MAN WHO TOOK YOU FROM YOUR SISTERS!
KRR
KRR
KRR
KRR
RRR
GOHON-MATSU!!

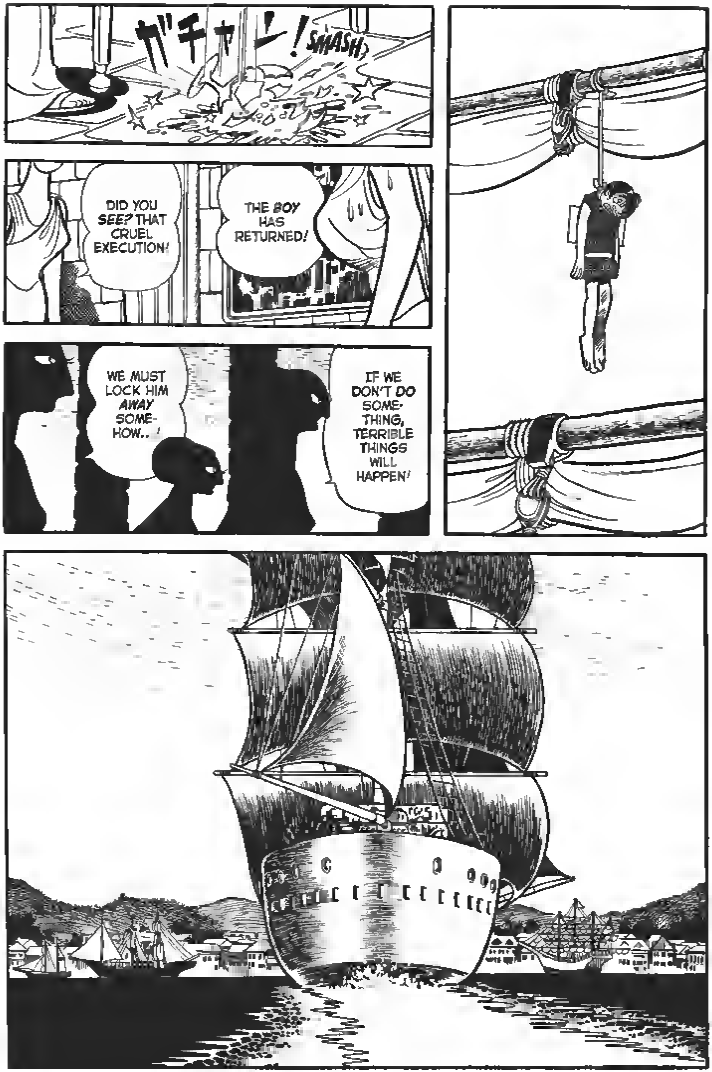

NOW, WIPE YOUR TEARS, MILDA... OUR PLANE IS WAITING!
PWHAP
AAAUUGGH!
VWOOOSSHHH
SHE CRIES LIKE SHE'S GONE MAD!
LET HER BE FOR NOW. WHEN SHE CALMS DOWN, WE'LL TAKE HER ABOARD.

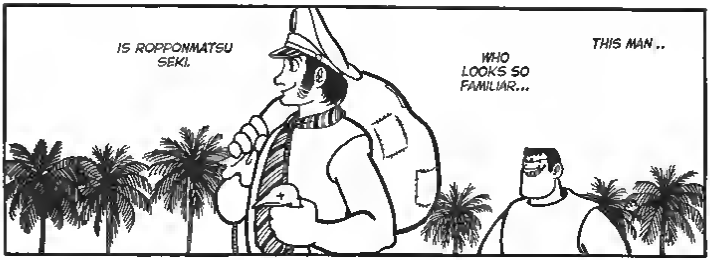
CHAPTER 20

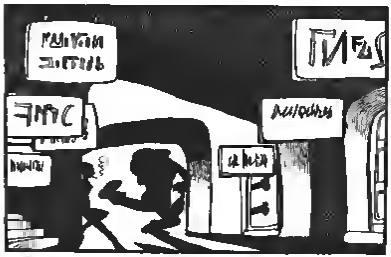
# CODA

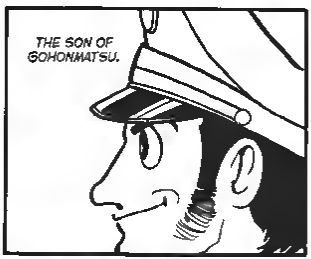

TWENTY YEARS PASSED
THE WORLD HAD BEEN COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED. NOW, HUMAN CIVILIZATION WOULD DEVELOP IN A NEW DIRECTION. IT WAS THE BIRTH OF A NEW MORALITY, WHERE THE BONDS OF MAN'S FORMER SOCIETY WERE BROKEN ONE-BY-ONE.

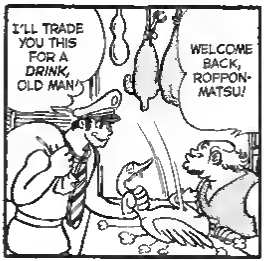

KREE KREE KREE
KREE KREE
LOWER THE SAILS!
LAND, HO!
GATHER THE CREW!
CAPTAIN! THIS CRIMINAL'S BEEN STEALING PROVISIONS ON THE VOYAGE TO FATTEN HIS OWN BELLY!
WE'RE NOT ON LAND YET! SO WE'LL TRY YOU BY THE WAYS OF THE SEA!
C-CAN'T YOU TRY ME ON LAND, AT LEAST?
EXE-CUTE HIM!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THIS MAN WHO'S STOLEN FOOD? RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU THINK HE'S GUILTY!

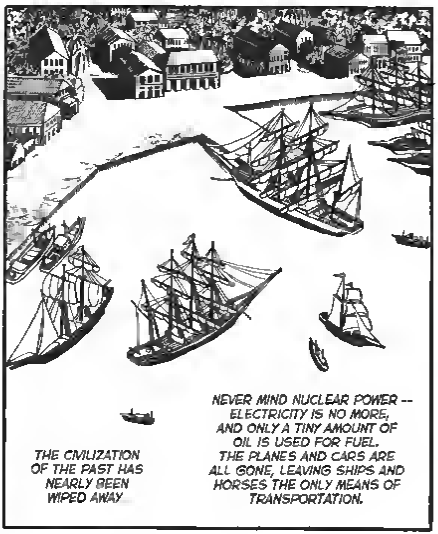

ガチャン!
SMASH!
DID YOU SEE? THAT CRUEL EXECUTION!
THE BOY HAS RETURNED!
WE MUST LOCK HIM AWAY SOME-HOW..!
IF WE DON'T DO SOME-THING, TERRIBLE THINGS WILL HAPPEN!


IS ROPPONMATSU SEKI.
WHO LOOKS SO FAMILIAR...
THIS MAN ..

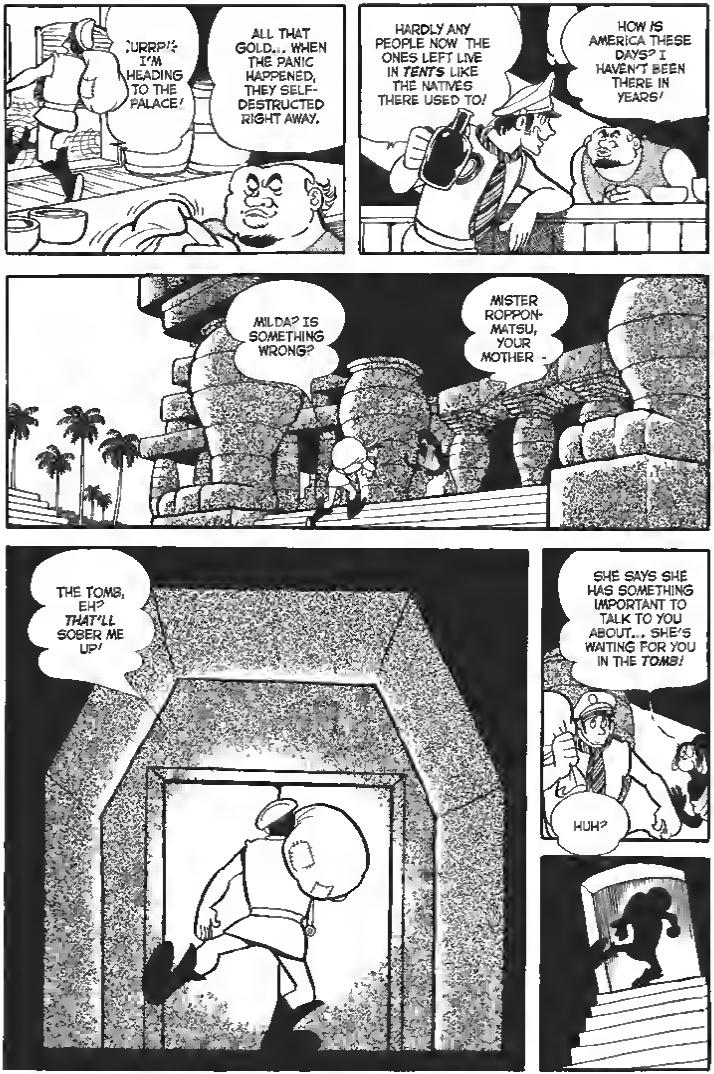



THE SON OF GOHONMATSU.

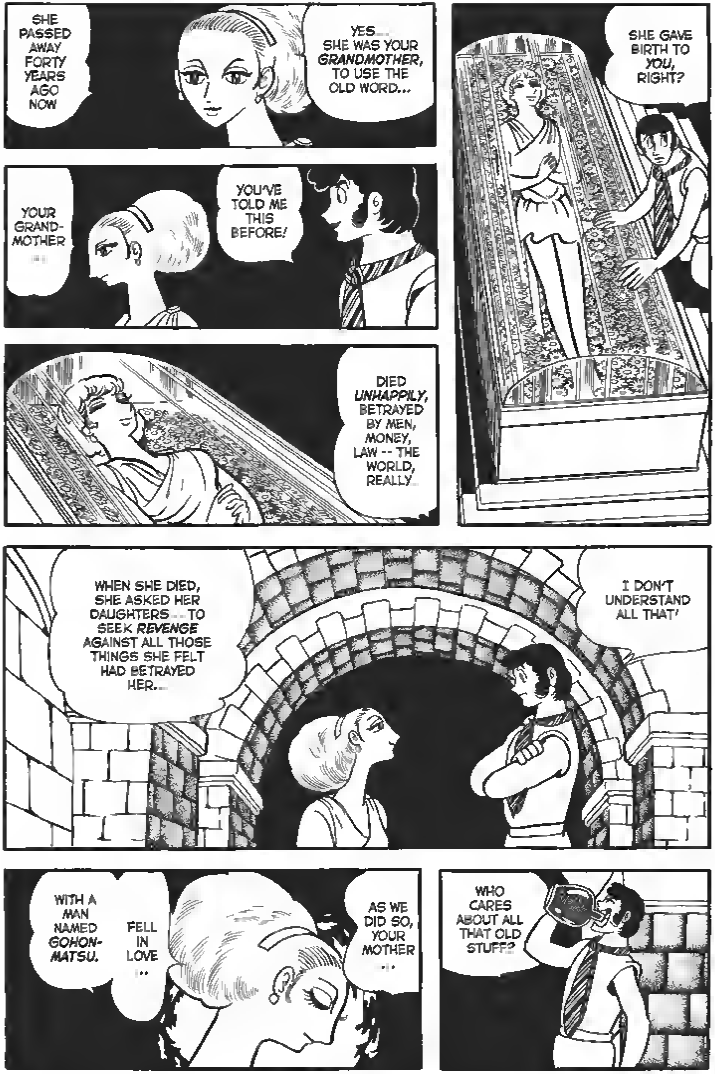

I'LL TRADE YOU THIS FOR A DRINK, OLD MAN!
WELCOME BACK, ROPPON-MATSU!


THE CIVILIZATION OF THE PAST HAS NEARLY BEEN WIPED AWAY
NEVER MIND NUCLEAR POWER -- ELECTRICITY IS NO MORE, AND ONLY A TINY AMOUNT OF OIL IS USED FOR FUEL. THE PLANES AND CARS ARE ALL GONE, LEAVING SHIPS AND HORSES THE ONLY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION.

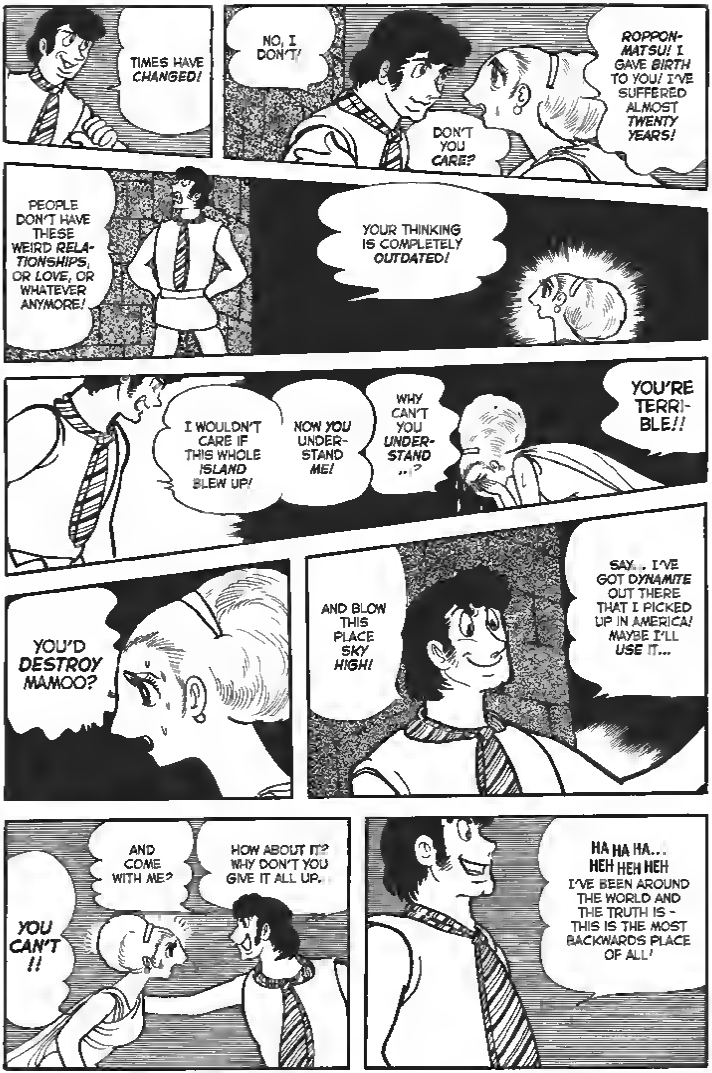
GOOD! WE CIRCLED THE AMERICAS!
HOW WAS YOUR VOYAGE?


ALL THAT GOLD... WHEN THE PANIC HAPPENED, THEY SELF-DESTRUCTED RIGHT AWAY.
URRP!~ I'M HEADING TO THE PALACE!
HOW IS AMERICA THESE DAYS? I HAVEN'T BEEN THERE IN YEARS!
HARDLY ANY PEOPLE NOW THE ONES LEFT LIVE IN TENTS LIKE THE NATIVES THERE USED TO!
MISTER ROPPONMATSU, YOUR MOTHER -
MILDA? IS SOMETHING WRONG?
SHE SAYS SHE HAS SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT... SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU IN THE TOMB!
HUH?
THE TOMB, EH? THAT'LL SOBER ME UP!

YOU'VE BECOME EVEN MORE HANDSOME.
IN THE TWO YEARS YOU'VE BEEN AWAY AT SEA...
WELCOME HOME, ROPPONMATSU.
HUH? BUT THAT WORD SOUNDS SO SILLY!
JUST ONCE, PLEASE CALL ME MOTHER!
WHAT IS IT, MILDA?
ROPPONMATSU, LOOK...!
BUT I COULDN'T WITH MY SISTERS WATCHING ME!
THIS IS THE ONE PLACE IN THE PALACE WHERE THE TWO OF US CAN SPEAK PRIVATELY.
THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE WANTED TO TELL YOU...
WHY'D YOU BRING ME DOWN TO THIS DARK PLACE?
YOUR NAME'S MILDA, RIGHT? SO WHY SHOULDN'T I CALL YOU THAT?

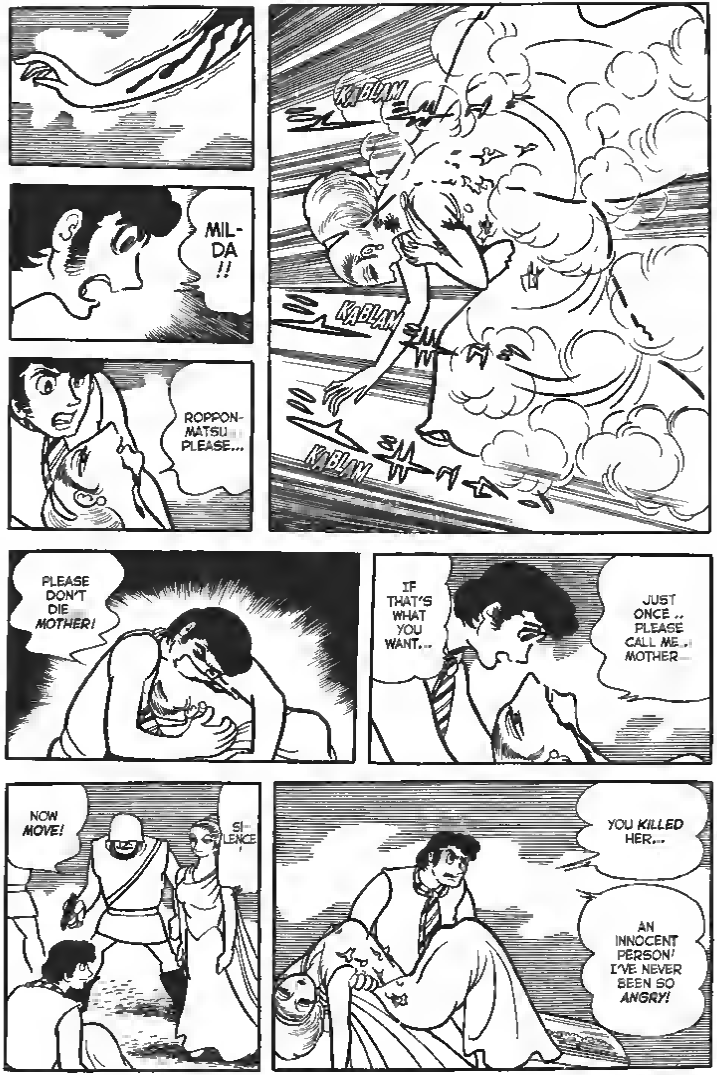

SHE PASSED AWAY FORTY YEARS AGO NOW
YES... SHE WAS YOUR *GRANDMOTHER*, TO USE THE OLD WORD...
SHE GAVE BIRTH TO *YOU*, RIGHT?
YOUR GRAND-MOTHER
YOU'VE TOLD ME THIS BEFORE!
DIED *UNHAPPILY*, BETRAYED BY MEN, MONEY, LAW -- THE WORLD, REALLY
WHEN SHE DIED, SHE ASKED HER DAUGHTERS... TO SEEK *REVENGE* AGAINST ALL THOSE THINGS SHE FELT HAD BETRAYED HER...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL THAT!
WITH A MAN NAMED *GOHON-MATSU*.
FELL IN LOVE...
AS WE DID SO, YOUR MOTHER...
WHO CARES ABOUT ALL THAT OLD STUFF?

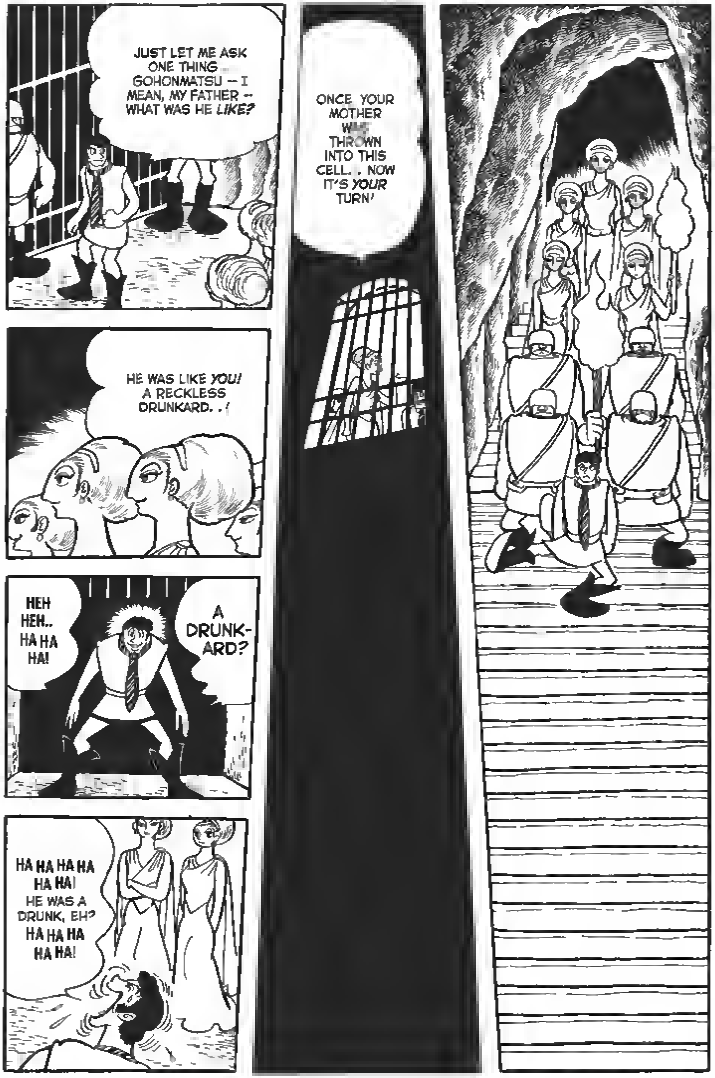
I LOVED HIM WITH ALL MY HEART.
BUT THEN...
MY SISTERS CAME...
AND *MURDERED* HIM! IN THE MOST COWARDLY WAY!
GLUG! GLUG!
AT THAT MOMENT, I SWORE AN OATH OF MY *OWN!* AS MY MOTHER ASKED ME... I WOULD ASK MY CHILD TO SEEK REVENGE AGAINST THOSE WHO HAD RUINED *MY* LIFE!
YOU WANT ME TO DO WHAT YOU DID, MILDA?
PLEASE, ROPPONMATSU... *FULFILL* YOUR MOTHER'S WISH!!
WHAT'S ANY OF THIS GOT TO DO WITH *ME?*
YOU'RE MY *SON!!*
BWAH HA HA HA HA HA HA HEH HEH HEH HEH
THAT'S SO *OLD!*
SONS, MOTHERS, REVENGE... THOSE WORDS DON'T MEAN *ANYTHING* ANYMORE!
THEY'RE *ABSURD!*
I'M NOT GETTING MIXED UP IN ANY OF THAT *NONSENSE!*

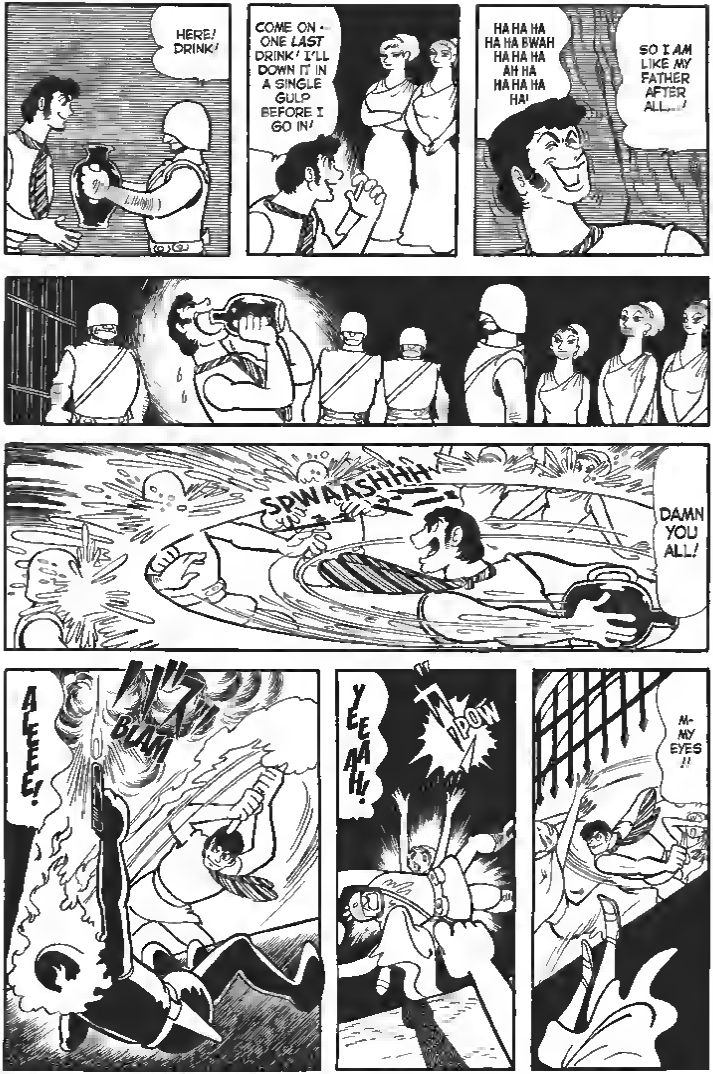

TIMES HAVE CHANGED!
NO, I DON'T!
ROPPONMATSU! I GAVE BIRTH TO YOU! I'VE SUFFERED ALMOST TWENTY YEARS!
DON'T YOU CARE?
PEOPLE DON'T HAVE THESE WEIRD RELATIONSHIPS, OR LOVE, OR WHATEVER ANYMORE!
YOUR THINKING IS COMPLETELY OUTDATED!
YOU'RE TERRIBLE!!
WHY CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND ...?
NOW YOU UNDERSTAND ME!
I WOULDN'T CARE IF THIS WHOLE ISLAND BLEW UP!
SAY... I'VE GOT DYNAMITE OUT THERE THAT I PICKED UP IN AMERICA! MAYBE I'LL USE IT...
AND BLOW THIS PLACE SKY HIGH!
YOU'D DESTROY MAMOO?
HA HA HA... HEH HEH HEH I'VE BEEN AROUND THE WORLD AND THE TRUTH IS - THIS IS THE MOST BACKWARDS PLACE OF ALL!
HOW ABOUT IT? WHY DON'T YOU GIVE IT ALL UP...
AND COME WITH ME?
YOU CAN'T !!

KRRR
SO -- HERE YOU ARE!
ROPPON MATSU, YOU ARE TO BE LOCKED AWAY!
WHAT'S THIS?! YOU DARE ENTER THE SACRED TOMB?!
SPECIAL POLICE!
WE SEE YOU BECOMING UNCONTROLLABLE, AND IT IS FEARED YOU COULD ONE DAY POSE A THREAT! THAT IS WHY WE MUST TAKE THESE PRECAUTIONS!
ME?
LOCKED AWAY?
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!
STILL DETERMINED TO BETRAY US, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING TO YOUR SON ABOUT, MILDA?
HE'S MY SON!
I WON'T LET YOU LAY A HAND ON ROPPON MATSU!

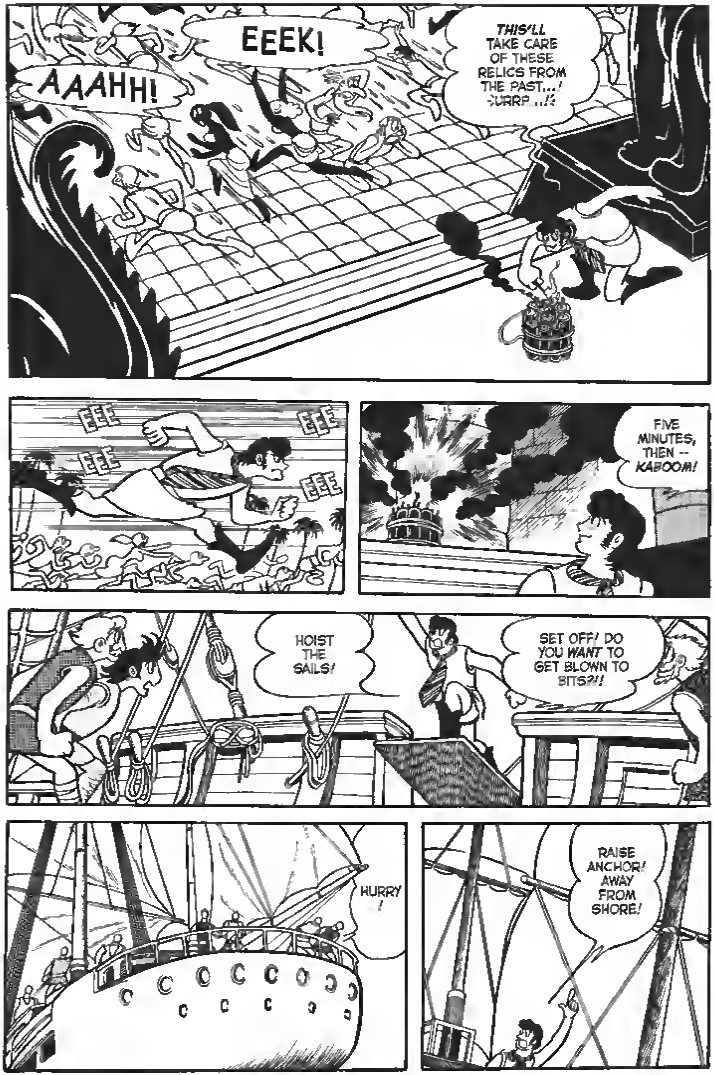
YOU MURDERED MY HUSBAND!
HOW COULD I? I'LL NEVER FORGET THE HATRED I'VE FELT FOR TWENTY YEARS!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BETRAY ZEPHYRUS?
I WON'T DO AS YOU SAY ANY LONGER!
:HMPH:!
OUR OATH IS UNTIL DEATH!
ALWAYS THE SAME STORY
SILENCE! IF YOU SAY ANOTHER WORD, WE'LL HAVE YOU SHOT!
YOU ARE RELICS, MY SISTERS! THE WORLD HAS CHANGED, BUT NONE OF YOU HAVE IN THE SLIGHTEST! TIME WILL LEAVE YOU ALL BEHIND...!
GO, ROPPONMATSU! GET AWAY FROM HERE!


MIL-DA !!
ROPPON-MATSU PLEASE...
KABLAM
KABLAM
KABLAM
PLEASE DON'T DIE MOTHER!
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...
JUST ONCE .. PLEASE CALL ME .. MOTHER...
NOW MOVE!
SI-LENCE
YOU KILLED HER...
AN INNOCENT PERSON! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO ANGRY!

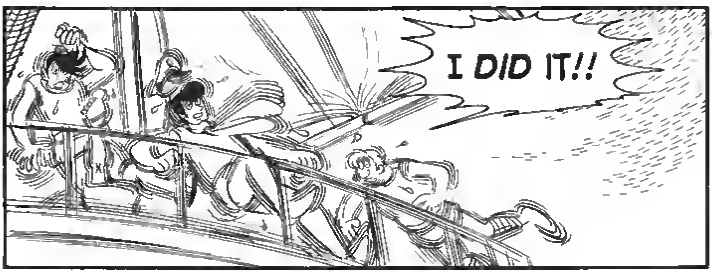

JUST LET ME ASK ONE THING... GOHONMATSU -- I MEAN, MY FATHER -- WHAT WAS HE *LIKE?*
ONCE YOUR MOTHER WAS THROWN INTO THIS CELL... NOW IT'S *YOUR* TURN!
HE WAS LIKE *YOU!* A RECKLESS DRUNKARD..!
HEH HEH.. HA HA HA!
A DRUNK-ARD?
HA HA HA HA HA HA! HE WAS A DRUNK, EH? HA HA HA HA HA!

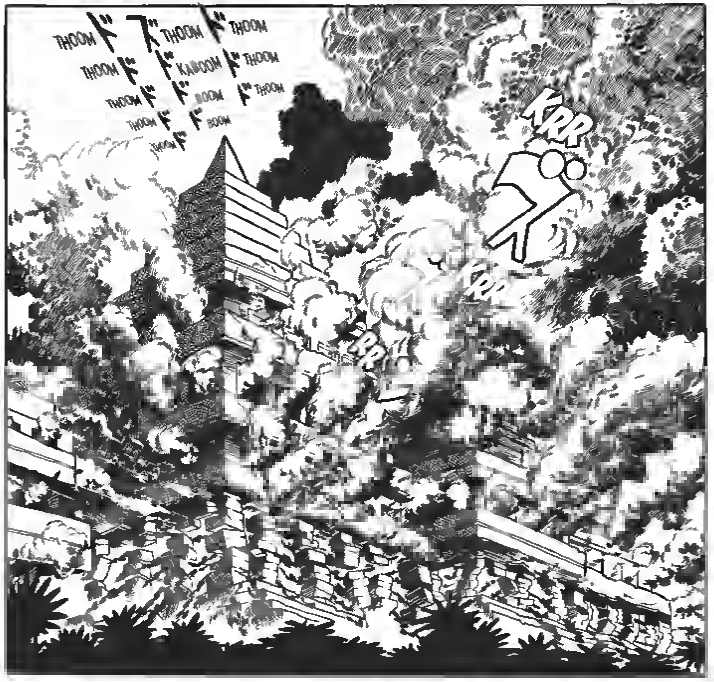

HERE! DRINK!
COME ON - ONE LAST DRINK! I'LL DOWN IT IN A SINGLE GULP BEFORE I GO IN!
HA HA HA HA HA BWAH HA HA HA AH HA HA HA HA HA!
SO I AM LIKE MY FATHER AFTER ALL...!
SPWAASHHH
DAMN YOU ALL!
AIEEE!
BLAM
YEEAHH!
POW
M-MY EYES !!

LET US OUT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! DON'T GO!!
SHIKAN
GYAAH!
EEEEE!
SHIKAN
LISTEN! I'M LEAVIN' HERE -- BLOWING THIS PLACE UP FOR GOOD AND TAKING OFF!
IF YOU WANT TO RUN, THEN GO! ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STOP ME IS MY ENEMY! ...URRP! SO DECIDE NOW!!
TO HELL WITH THIS WHOLE STINKIN' PLACE!

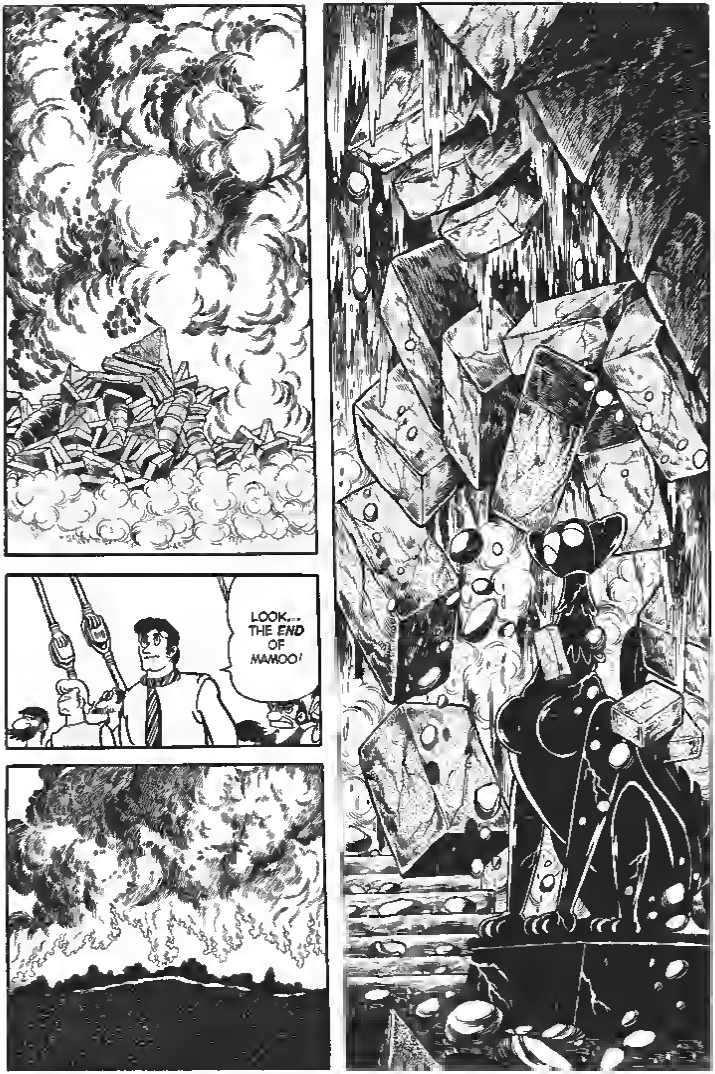

AAAHH!
EEEK!
THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE RELICS FROM THE PAST...! -URRP ..!?
EEE
EEE
EEE
EEE
FIVE MINUTES, THEN -- KABOOM!
HOIST THE SAILS!
SET OFF! DO YOU WANT TO GET BLOWN TO BITS?!!
HURRY !
RAISE ANCHOR! AWAY FROM SHORE!

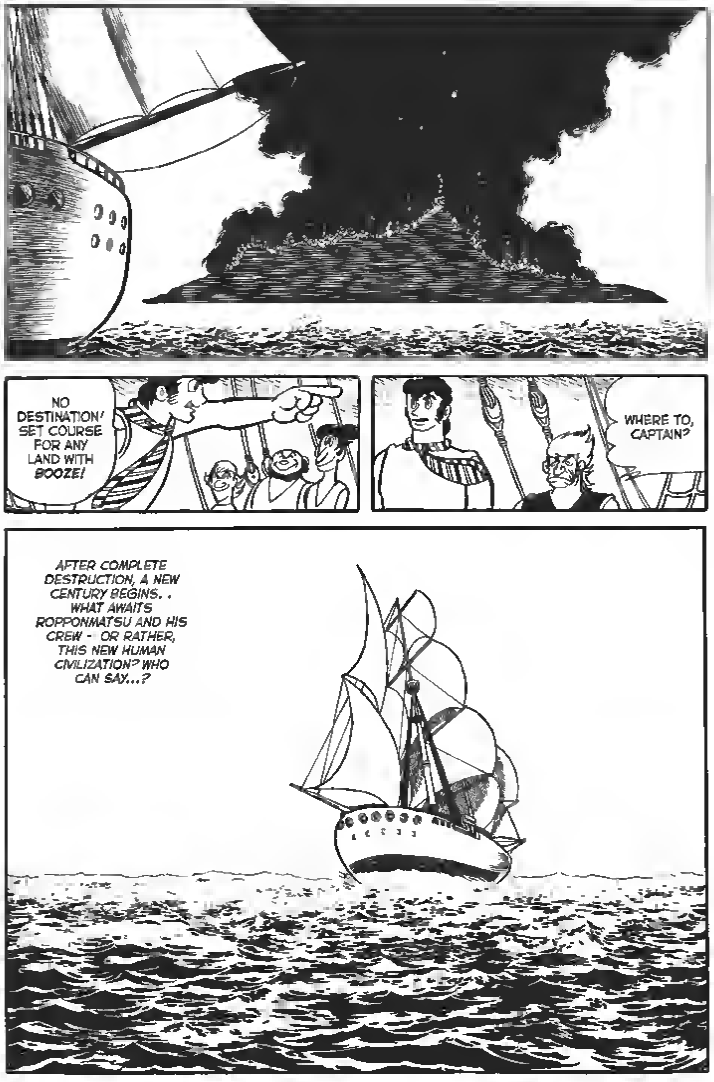
KABOOOM!!


I DID IT!!



BOOM
BOOM
BOOM


LOOK... THE *END* OF MAMOO!


NO DESTINATION! SET COURSE FOR ANY LAND WITH BOOZE!
WHERE TO, CAPTAIN?
AFTER COMPLETE DESTRUCTION, A NEW CENTURY BEGINS. . WHAT AWAITS ROPPONMATSU AND HIS CREW - OR RATHER, THIS NEW HUMAN CIVILIZATION? WHO CAN SAY...?

HOLD UP!
This is the back of the book! Please start the book from the other side...
Native manga readers read manga right to left to keep the manga true to its original vision. To enjoy, turn over and start from the other side and read right to left, top to bottom.
Follow the diagram to see how it's done!
If you see the logo below, you'll know that this book is published in its original native format.
NATIVE MANGA
READ RIGHT TO LEFT
HELLO MY NAME IS SHIO
I'm TAMAGO!
塩